

MARK ANTONY

A Life



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AMBERLEY

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‘ANTONY, THAT REVELS LONG O’ NIGHTS’

CAESAR:

See! Antony, that revels long o’ nights,
Is not withstanding up. Good morrow,
Antony

Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, II. ii.

The life of Mark Antony is the stuff of legend. No one needs to be a specialist in Roman history to form an opinion of him, but much of what we think we know of Antony has been moulded for us by various authors from Roman times to Shakespeare, who provides the title for this chapter. There are few surviving contemporary notices of Antony. Caesar mentions him only briefly in his accounts of the Gallic war and the civil wars, and in his letters to Atticus and other friends, Marcus Tullius Cicero comments on Antony’s activities as Caesar’s agent and then as Caesar’s successor.

By far the most extensive contemporary work describing Antony is the wholly derogatory *Philippics*, also by Marcus Tullius Cicero. These vitriolic speeches were delivered just after the assassination of Caesar, when civil war loomed between Antony and the senatorial party. Cicero and Antony had been mortal enemies ever since the time of the so-called Catilinarian conspiracy, supposedly detected, and ruthlessly suppressed, by Cicero as consul in 63 BC. Antony’s stepfather, Lentulus Sura, was implicated in the plot, and summarily executed without a trial, along with several others. The whole episode is fraught with difficulty and doubt, and modern historians have wondered whether Catiline really had formed a scheme to overthrow the state, as Cicero claimed. At the time, however, Cicero played the role of saviour. He never let anyone forget what he considered to be his finest hour, but he had made too many enemies by his peremptory actions in securing the condemnation of the men he had rounded up and arrested. As a lawyer himself, Cicero knew too well that if he went through the proper procedure of individual trials, with clever defence lawyers to speak for the accused, he would probably not secure the results that he desired, so Lentulus Sura and the others had

to be executed as quickly as possible. That was bad enough, but Antony claimed that Cicero would not release the body so that the proper funeral rites could be observed.

Most of what is known about Antony's background and upbringing derives from snippets gleaned from Cicero's *Philippics*, all of it derogatory, with no redeeming factor acknowledging Antony's talents. This is hardly surprising since Cicero's purpose was to persuade the Senate and the people to eliminate Antony, whom he portrayed as *hostis*, an enemy of the state, and through his speeches he succeeded in having him declared so by the Senate. This meant that Antony was outside the law, and could be killed by anyone who had the means and the opportunity. Cicero made fourteen speeches between the beginning of September 44 and April 43 BC, when Antony was defeated at the battle of Mutina (modern Modena) and retreated with his army into Gaul.

In most of the speeches Cicero concentrates on Antony's dissolute character, as an associate from his earliest youth of the most disreputable men in Rome, and as an inveterate drunkard who was not ashamed to be sick behind a pillar in the Senate House. On both counts, Antony would have admitted to the charges. He was, for the most part and as far as possible, loyal to his disreputable friends. Later in his life, just before the battle of Actium, in response to a verbal attack by Octavian outlining his bad habits, Antony wrote a pamphlet about his own drunkenness, called *De Ebrietate Sua*. From his own exploits and Cicero's portrayal of them, Antony's character as a hard drinker, a womaniser, and near delinquent is preserved for posterity. Whether he was an enemy of the state, bent on its destruction as Cicero insisted when he was working up the senators to a pitch of hostility, is somewhat less credible.

Cicero did not survive the alliance between Antony, Caesar's great-nephew Octavian, and Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, known as the second Triumvirate. He was killed before he could sail for the east and join his heroes Brutus and Cassius, Caesar's assassins. Antony takes most of the blame for the death of Cicero, even though Octavian too had just as much reason to wish him out of the way. This legalised murder of the great lawyer and orator occurred before Antony had entered on his notorious association with Cleopatra, so apart from a few remarks about the Queen of Egypt as she left Rome after Caesar's death, Cicero was not given the opportunity to denounce Cleopatra as an enemy of Rome. That was left to Octavian himself. When his alliance with Antony began to founder, Octavian claimed that Antony had fallen under the evil influence of Cleopatra, whose designs on Rome were nothing less than complete subjugation. Consequently he

was able to portray the Queen as the main enemy of the Roman people, with Antony tagging along as her bewitched consort. This circumvented the need to declare war overtly on a fellow Roman, and converted what was essentially a civil war into a perfectly justified foreign one.

When Octavian had secured his supremacy at the head of the state, and had been rewarded with the title Augustus, he was able to ensure that Antony's reputation, which he had already blackened before he made war on him, never recovered. Augustus produced an autobiography, with no good word for Antony, transferring the blame for all that was sordid about their former alliance onto him. No one spoke up for Antony, because it was better to accept the calumnies heaped on him than to start another era of internal strife.

As a consequence of Augustus' propaganda, Antony failed to attract biographers, favourable or otherwise, for some considerable time. Ancient historians probably followed the party line, but unfortunately there is very little surviving evidence to elucidate what was written about him until the second century AD. Two of Antony's contemporaries wrote histories of their period, Asinius Pollio covering the civil war, and Quintus Dellius describing Antony's Parthian campaign, but these works have not survived. It is likely that the historian Titus Livius, known as Livy, had access to these and other books when he wrote his lengthy history of Rome, which he worked on from the end of the first century BC until the first decade of the first century AD – he died in AD 17, only three years after Octavian-Augustus himself. It is unfortunate that only thirty-five books of Livy's original 142 have survived, and it is not known whether he covered Antony's life story in detail, or how he portrayed him. However independent Livy may have been, the influence of Octavian-Augustus would be too strong to allow for the publication of any favourable account of Antony's life.

One of the first writers to try to present a more-or-less unbiased portrait of Antony was Plutarch, who was born probably in AD 45 in Chaeronea in Greece. At the beginning of the second century AD, in the reign of Trajan, Plutarch produced his accounts of famous Romans, pairing them all with their nearest counterparts in Greek history. He wrote in Greek for a Greek audience. He researched his Roman biographies by reading some of the available Latin literature, though he was not as proficient in Latin as he would have liked. He also travelled to the places where his subjects had flourished or failed to try to assess how they may have acted and thought. Plutarch's grandfather had been compelled, along with many other Greeks, to carry supplies for Antony's army at Actium, and could testify to the

hardships of the Greeks after Antony's defeat. Although Antony had died nearly a century before Plutarch was born, he may have absorbed some of the living tradition about Mark Antony and Cleopatra from his family and perhaps from other Greeks. Since Plutarch wrote more words about Antony than any of his other subjects, it seems that he found this particular subject interesting.

The ancient authors did not approach biographies in the same way that modern writers do. Although it is always necessary to delve into the history and context of the period when describing what people did, and where and why they did it, the ancient biographers used their work to present aspects of history according to their own way of thinking, and to make points about the personalities and periods about which they wrote. Analysis of cause and effect took second place to this moralising approach.

Plutarch presents Antony as rather aimless, with no firm beliefs or guidelines of his own, too easily influenced by others and susceptible to flattery. This is Plutarch's theme throughout the work, and it has to be admitted that it neatly accounts for Antony's easy-going subordination to Caesar, and more pertinently to his ultimately disastrous association with Cleopatra, which was widely interpreted, with considerable help from Octavian, as a form of deplorable enslavement. In Plutarch's biography of Antony, Cleopatra is given considerable coverage. She is portrayed as clever, and not above using her wiles to get what she wants, but she is not presented simply as a scheming enemy of Rome. Both Antony and Cleopatra emerge from Plutarch's account as people, not wholly perfect, not wholly evil, but human.

Significantly, Plutarch compared Antony to Demetrius of Macedon, who was born in the second half of the fourth century BC. He was the son of Antigonus, governor of Phrygia under Alexander the Great. Antigonus built up a considerable Empire in Greece, but lost all his territories and also his life at the battle of Ipsus in 301 BC. Through determination and ability, Demetrius reconstituted much of his father's Empire, earning the title 'Besieger of Cities', but gradually his conquests fell apart and in the end he was defeated and captured by Seleucus of Babylonia. Like Antony, Demetrius was good-humoured, approachable, and a bluff soldier, but he could be ruthless when necessary. After his defeat, again like Antony, Demetrius became despondent, seeking consolation, but failing to find it, in wine.

Some glimpses of Antony can be discerned in Plutarch's other biographies, especially of Pompey and Caesar, but mostly these consist of brief notices of what he did and when, rather than any assessment

of him. Also, Plutarch is not above taking a stance on his main subject, which he then presents in a different way when he includes that figure in the biography of another subject, without necessarily completely contradicting himself. A description of the events at the festival of the Lupercalia in February 44 occurs in the biography of Julius Caesar and of Antony, but the slant is different. In this famous episode, Antony offers Caesar a diadem, or crown, and Caesar refuses it, twice. The spectators roar their approval that Caesar has not accepted it, and with it the kingship. In his biography of Julius Caesar, Plutarch presents the episode as an experiment by Caesar himself to test the water, to see whether the crowd approved or disapproved of his acceptance of the diadem offered him by Antony, which would effectively make him king. All is calm and calculated in this account, but in the biography of Antony, the episode is described much more dramatically, with Antony's supporters cheering him on, as though they were all conspiring to make Caesar king. Caesar reacts angrily, tearing his toga from his neck to offer his throat to anyone who wished to kill him. There is no suggestion here of an experiment to gauge popular feeling.

During the reign of Hadrian, Suetonius Tranquillus wrote his twelve Imperial biographies covering Julius Caesar, then Augustus and the ten succeeding Emperors, ending with Domitian. In his biography of Augustus, Suetonius mentions letters written by Antony, suggesting that somewhere in the archives, the originals, or copies of them, survived. Such items are of course subject to forgery or outright fiction to fill someone's agenda, but the topics that Suetonius discusses have a certain ring of authenticity, given Antony's allegedly bluff and rather coarse, humorous nature. Suetonius describes how Octavian held a party for twelve guests in which they all dressed up as gods and goddesses, with Octavian as Apollo. It caused a minor scandal, and apparently Antony took great delight in writing letters naming all the people who had attended. During the mud-slinging before the civil war broke out, Antony accused Octavian of various sexual scandals, and Suetonius quotes a letter written by Antony asking what on earth was the matter with Octavian and why had he changed so much?

Is it because I lie with the Queen [Cleopatra]? She is my wife. Is it something I have just started, or was it nine years ago? Do you only sleep with [Livia] Drusilla? Good luck to you if by the time you read this you have not been with Tertulla or Terentia or Rufilla or Salvia Titisenia, or all of them. Does it matter where you get your erections?

Another letter allegedly written by Antony is hardly complimentary to

Octavian, indicating that perhaps there was no severe censorship of Antony's papers after his death. Suetonius says that Antony wrote a letter describing how, at a battle in northern Italy near Mutina, Octavian fled and did not turn up again until the next day, minus his cloak and without his horse.

In the middle of the second century AD, during the reign of Antoninus Pius, the historian Appian wrote a history of Rome, compressing a very long time span into a relatively short work. He used many sources for the period of the civil wars between Antony and Octavian, and his work is of importance in that although several of these ancient sources are no longer extant, they are partially preserved in Appian's work. Born in Alexandria, Appian came to Rome to practise as an advocate, but although he had accepted Roman citizenship, his loyalties were to his native Egypt, so the events there are covered in greater depth, if not in unbiased form. From 35 BC onwards, Appian's history is lost, so his account of the last years of the war between Octavian and Antony, and his opinion of the victors and losers in 30 BC, are inaccessible.

Appian was a historian rather than a biographer, and naturally devoted more space to political aspects than Plutarch was able to afford. This is not to say that Appian was not interested in personalities, but with a much broader canvas to cover, and for the sake of connected narrative he could not spare the space or time to outline people's life stories or do more than sketch their characters. Antony is therefore known in Appian's narrative for what he did rather than for what he was. On the other hand, Appian perhaps subscribes more heavily to romance than Plutarch does. He says that when Antony dined on board Cleopatra's ship at Tarsus, he fell violently in love with her on the spot, bowled over by her personality and her appearance. From then on, according to Appian, Antony was captivated, and began to lose interest in political and military life.

This portrayal of Antony, dominated by Cleopatra and totally enervated with regard to his command of the eastern half of the Roman world, follows Octavian's party line. It most probably seemed quite accurate to the Romans who read the stories of the end of the Republic and the beginning of the Empire. After all, Antony did remain in the east, preferring to spend all his free time in Egypt with Cleopatra, in between going off to wage mostly unsuccessful wars or to arrange revised treaties with Octavian. Without reference to the fact that command of the east was within his original brief when he and Octavian carved up the Roman world, the bare bones of the story will bear the interpretation that Antony had turned his back on Rome, and he did so because he had been bewitched by Cleopatra.

By the time that Shakespeare came to deal with Antony, this view was entrenched. Plutarch's biography had been translated into French in the mid-sixteenth century, and this version was then translated into English. It is acknowledged that Shakespeare used this as his main source, especially for *Antony and Cleopatra*.

In *Julius Caesar*, Antony's reputation as a late-night drinker is taken for granted – 'Antony, that revels long o' nights'. He is Caesar's henchman, almost monosyllabic, uttering sentences like 'When Caesar says "Do this," it is perform'd.' In plotting Caesar's murder, Cassius argues that Antony should also be killed, because he will be 'a shrewd contriver' and might possibly gain enough strength to oppose them all. Brutus, on the other hand, dismisses Antony as merely a limb of Caesar, who 'can do no more than Caesar's arm when Caesar's head is cut off'. This does not imply that Brutus trusts Antony; merely that he discounts him, because he will soon get over Caesar's death. And Trebonius endorses this opinion: 'There is no fear in him; let him not die; | For he will live, and laugh at this hereafter.' Cassius is soon proved right to distrust Antony. Immediately after the murder of Caesar, Shakespeare's previously compliant Antony comes to life, playing a dangerous game and knowing it, but bowling everyone over with what is probably the most famous, and subtly clever, funeral speech in the world. He protests that he comes to bury Caesar, not to praise him, and then proceeds to enumerate all that Caesar has done for Rome and the Roman people, demolishing the accusation of Brutus – 'an honourable man' – that Caesar was ambitious. Antony has the upper hand, but by the end of the play Octavian, who is more correctly labelled as Octavius Caesar, emerges as a major force, paving the way for his and Antony's roles in the later play, *Antony and Cleopatra*.

Antony and Cleopatra starts with Antony already besotted with Cleopatra, with his friends lamenting in the first scene about how he has changed from his former self and is now in his dotage. Antony uses the same description himself when he sighs, 'These strong Egyptian fetters I must break, | Or lose myself in dotage.' He revives now and then, and sees clearly what must be done, but gradually he approaches his inevitable tragic end, deserted by his officers and overwhelmed by Octavian. At his death he insists that it is not Octavian's valour that has defeated him but his own, echoing Plutarch's judgement that while the Greek Demetrius harmed others, Antony harmed himself.

Mark Antony can be viewed from several angles as the perpetual drunkard, the bluff soldier, Caesar's willing lieutenant, the merciless killer of Cicero, Cleopatra's paramour, Octavian's enemy. He can be

seen as a heroic loser fighting for a lost cause, or a pathetic failure who threw everything away for the sake of a woman. His story is perfect for a tragedy, but this should not overshadow the humour and humanity in Antony's life. These facets of his character are among those that set him apart from his contemporaries. He was determined to enjoy life and made no secret of it, and he did not conform, so he was seen as dissolute and irresponsible. He could definitely not be said to uphold the Roman virtues of *dignitas* and *gravitas*. There was probably much more fun to be had in his company than in the entourage of Cato or Brutus, and for the modern world, with its predilection for the anti-hero, that is perhaps Antony's greatest asset.

THE POLITICAL SCENE

During Antony's youth Rome was dominated by a succession of determined, enterprising politicians who bent or broke the rules to accrue enough personal power and influence to reshape the Republic and its functions, in accordance with their own policies. They usually insisted that it was all done for Rome first and personal credit second, and when they said Rome they usually meant just the upper, wealthy classes rather than the people. The politicians who tried to speak for the populace often met sticky ends. By Antony's day, the state was divided into the best men, the *optimates*, and the demagogues, the *populares*, who were regarded by the more conservative senators as little more than rabble rousers.

Opposition from the senators was often aimed at the person rather than the programme that he was trying to put through, with no thought for the possible benefits to the state that could have resulted from the proposed bills. On occasion, even blatantly necessary, perfectly justifiable measures were quelled because of personal animosities between factions in the Senate. The response to such opposition was often heavy-handed, involving escalating factional strife to which the Republic was subject for much of its existence. This state of affairs frequently lent itself to the emergence of a single dominant figure who swept aside opposition. Julius Caesar was the foremost example of such a dominant figure, but he was an exception to the rule in that he did not allow the massacre of his opponents in authorised proscriptions such as those of his predecessors Gaius Marius and Lucius Cornelius Sulla and his successors Antony and Octavian.

The political organisation that allowed for such violent proceedings had a long history. Early Rome was ruled by kings, seven of them in nearly two and a half centuries, according to the legend. Each king was credited with some development in Rome, some of them beneficial and some detrimental, but much of the information that has been handed down is probably more fiction than fact.

Traditionally, at the end of the sixth century BC, the Romans expelled the tyrannical kings who oppressed them. The date is not established beyond doubt because it was worked out retrospectively by Roman historians, who worked backwards through their scant

public and private archives and their lists of officials to arrive at a precise date of 509 BC for the foundation of the Republic. The new system of government was designed to ensure that no single individual acquired supreme power ever again. From now onwards, officials would come in pairs or groups, and would hold office for only one year, or an otherwise specified short term.

In emergencies, one man could be given supreme power for short periods via an appointment as Dictator. This office was held for no more than six months and had to be relinquished at the expiry of that period. It was abused during the later Republic, when Lucius Cornelius Sulla held the office for longer than the six-month period in order to put his reforms into effect. He did lay down his power when he had completed his aims, and went into retirement. Caesar thought him mad to do so. He held the Dictatorship on more than one occasion, and eventually accepted it for life, but in doing so he effectively shortened his life, since he was assassinated shortly afterwards. It was not necessarily tyrannical megalomania that made men like Sulla and Caesar accept the office of Dictator. The annual turnover of magistrates facilitated short-term measures, but made it difficult to set in motion long-term plans and keep them running until completion. Incoming magistrates could so easily overturn the legislation or other measures that the outgoing ones had instigated. One method of ensuring continuity was to set up a commission comprising a number of men who could step outside normal government office in order to see various projects through to conclusion, but even this method had its drawbacks, and commissions could be abolished.

The chief organ of government was the Senate, dealing with all aspects of administration, including finance, legislation, important trials for conspiracy and assassination, and foreign embassies. Membership of the Senate was based on wealth, and wealth derived primarily from land, so the leading senators tended to be landowners. This did not mean that it was an exclusively aristocratic organisation during the later Republic. For a long time the Romans were divided by class into patricians (nobles) and plebeians (the people – who were excluded from government). Gradually the plebeians gained more and more status and privileges at the expense of the patricians, including access to the Senate, so that by the time Antony was born the terms had lost their significance. A plebeian nobility had grown up side by side with the patricians, and wealth, coupled with a long ancestry that included famous men who had held the highest offices, became the benchmark of the best people.

The men who fell below the property qualification of the senators

ranked as equestrians (*equites*), who played no formal part in politics but often dealt with the business interests of senators with whom they were associated. Senators were forbidden to engage in work or trade, which was considered sordid and beneath their dignity, so many of them ran businesses through their equestrian associates. Access to the senate was not denied to equestrians but many of them preferred to pursue their monetary careers. From the early Empire, when the standing army was created, officers were increasingly drawn from this class.

The power of the Senate was balanced by the more limited power of the People. The initials SPQR on monuments and documents stand for *Senatus Populusque Romanus*, the Senate and People of Rome. During the middle years of the Republic, the people gained more power as politicians canvassed for their votes to pass laws and win elections to offices. Legally, the power of the people was limited to voting for candidates for office, or accepting or rejecting proposals put to them by the magistrates, but unscrupulous politicians could incite the mob to violence and sometimes get their own way by such means.

There were two main popular assemblies. The *comitia curiata* was the oldest, based on the thirty *curiae*, or divisions of the people. The later *comitia centuriata* was based on the electoral and military centuries. The *comitia curiata* confirmed the appointment of the magistrates, and conferred *imperium* on them, or the power to command armies, while the *comitia centuriata* could pass laws laid before them by the magistrates, and could reject or accept proposals for war.

The chief magistrates were the two consuls, elected annually, answerable to the Senate and People of Rome. Their responsibilities covered civil and military functions, embracing all political activities during the year of their office, and they also commanded the armies. Troops were levied each year if there was war, and Rome rarely passed a year without a war. Subordinate to the two consuls, there were several less-important, annually elected magistrates with varied responsibilities, such as praetors, whose duties were primarily legal, but who could also command armies; quaestors, who administered the treasury and finances; and aediles, who looked after the buildings and streets of the city, kept public order, regulated the markets, and took care of the water supply. One important innovation, with long-lasting consequences, was the institution of the office of Tribune of the Plebs, probably in 494 BC, when the plebeians of Rome went on strike and refused to serve in the army. The *tribuni plebis* were elected by the plebs and were sacrosanct while in office. Their primary duty was to protect the plebs and their property from oppression by the patricians,

facilitated in the political sphere by the tribunician right of veto, which enabled them not only to overturn any proposals but also to reverse any laws already passed by the magistrates in office.

By the first century BC, Rome had become much more than a fairly well-organised, adaptable city state with pre-eminence over her neighbours. She had acquired territories beyond her boundaries, and even beyond Italy, sometimes almost by accident under the heading of the search for secure borders, sometimes as a result of war dressed up as justified aggression, sometimes by default when kingdoms were bequeathed to Rome. Empirically and exponentially, the Romans learned how to adapt their political and military organisation, designed for a single city and its satellites, to suit the needs of an Empire. When the amount of daily business increased, they increased the number of personnel, and empowered them to deal with it.

The institution of the pro-magistracy was a major innovation that simultaneously allowed for almost seamless continuation of government of the city and the growing number of provinces, and provided wider experience for aspiring Roman politicians and generals. The first extension of powers in this way occurred towards the end of the fourth century BC. In 326 the consul Quintus Publilius Philo was still engaged in the siege of Naples when his consulship was technically due to expire. Normal procedure would have been to elect new consuls and send one of them to replace the commander, thereby risking loss of continuity and perhaps detrimentally interrupting the siege. An innovation with long-lasting consequences was established to circumvent the problem. Two new consuls were elected, and Philo was given the rank and title of proconsul, indicating that he was not actually consul, but retained consular power so that he could command the army. The proconsulship separated the powers from the annual office, allowing the proconsul to step down from office but to be invested with authority to complete existing tasks or to undertake new ones for which there were not enough suitably qualified officials.

The promagistracy was also extended to the praetors, and also the total number of praetors rose steadily, whereas the number of consuls never exceeded two at any one time. In the early Republic there was only one praetor, who was invested with *imperium*, or the power to command an army, and he also dealt with all aspects of the legal system. When the consuls were away from Rome, as they frequently were in times of war, the praetor acted as chief magistrate. By the middle of the third century BC, there were two praetors, one for internal affairs and one to look after the interests of foreigners. The total was increased to four when Rome annexed Sardinia and Sicily, thus requiring two extra men with military and legal powers to govern

and defend the new territories.

After their term of office as consul or praetor, the proconsuls and propraeors took on a specific task usually allotted to them by the Senate as need arose, such as supervision of the corn supply, management of woodlands, caring for the roads, or the government of one of the provinces. The term *provincia* was at first applied to any of these tasks, and only after the passage of time and the growth of the Empire did the word acquire its territorial connotations. Governing a province was the most lucrative task for the promagistrates. Despite the laws that were passed to prevent extortion of the provincials, and several notorious trials to punish those guilty of it, provincial governors could enrich themselves and pay off the debts that they had incurred in getting themselves elected in the first place. It became a way of life, and Caesar was no exception, relying on his appointment as propraeorian governor of Further Spain to gather funds, though he perhaps avoided outright extortion of the provincials and instead perhaps accepted gifts from people who were grateful that he had suppressed the Lusitanian bandits, or found in their favour in the courts. Other governors were less scrupulous, like the infamous Verres, the plunderer of Sicily who was prosecuted by Cicero. Provincials could appeal to Rome, and in this instance the Sicilians won their case after only the first of Cicero's prepared speeches. Verres was condemned and Cicero published his subsequent speeches, slightly piqued that he had not had a chance to proclaim them out loud in public.

When Pompey and Caesar entered on their careers, the Republican system still operated as it had always done since its foundation, but the flaws had begun to appear. In theory a career path had evolved for senators, combining a sequence of military and civil posts. Candidates for the high offices who followed this course ought to have reached their early forties and gained considerable experience before they took up the reins of state as consuls. Laws were passed setting age limits on the various magistracies and military commands, but in practice this legislation and even the electoral process meant very little. In desperate times, very young men could be awarded military commands and political offices without going through the process of election. During the wars against the Carthaginians, when Hannibal was wreaking havoc in Italy, Scipio Africanus was appointed to command Roman armies in Spain at the age of twenty-six, and he was granted consular powers without having held the office of consul. He went on to command in Africa, drawing Hannibal out of Italy and finally defeating him at the battle of Zama. In the turmoil and lawlessness of the feud between Gaius Marius and Lucius Cornelius

Sulla, a young plebeian noble called Gnaeus Pompeius, more familiarly known as Pompey, commanded armies from the age of twenty-three. Political procedure was adapted to legalise his position.

When the danger was past, adulation of the hero was usually replaced by fear of his power, so the Romans frequently turned against the men they had elevated to high office and removed them before they could turn into replicas of the tyrannical kings. After defeating Hannibal, Scipio Africanus was prosecuted and exiled. Pompey lost favour when he was not needed to save the Roman world, and gained it again when the ruling classes chose him to fend off Caesar.

Even in more peaceful times, burning political issues polarised senators and people alike. Bribery and main force ensured the election of the most determined men as consuls, who manoeuvred their friends into other key posts so that their political programmes could be implemented within their year of office. Rivals could be silenced by perfectly legal means using (or, rather, buying) the power of veto of the tribunes of the plebs. Whilst this power was still exercised for its original purpose of protecting the common people, towards the end of the Republic unscrupulous politicians regularly employed or bought the services of well-disposed tribunes to disrupt proceedings and prevent their rivals from putting their proposals into effect.

An accepted method of gaining notoriety was to carry out a successful prosecution of one or more of the leading politicians, past or present, and then to go on to hold office in Rome and a military command in the provinces. Successful command in a foreign war was the supreme short cut to fame and power, so there was a scramble for such appointments when opportunity arose. On occasion such a scramble could be bloody, involving riots and deaths, sometimes proscriptions to remove opposition. It was important to ally with the right people, though alliances between the leading families were sealed, often by dynastic marriages, or shattered according to the needs of the moment. Quick thinking and timely changes of allegiance were the norm. Enduring trust and loyalty did not feature very largely in Roman politics.

Antony was perhaps the exception to this rule. He entered recorded history with a few brief notices in Caesar's commentaries on the war in Gaul. He fought with Caesar in the first phase of the civil war against Pompey, and administered Italy while Caesar fought against the Pompeians in Africa and Spain. There were occasions when Antony fell out of favour, but he continued as a firm adherent of Caesar until the Ides of March 44. He expended much of his energy in

avenging Caesar and bringing down the assassins, and in continuing Caesar's policies in so far as they are known. He honoured the agreements made with Caesar's heir Octavian and responded to calls for assistance from him despite the fact that such episodes interrupted his own plans in the east. Antony was loyal to Caesar's memory, and from the moment of their first meaningful association he was loyal to Cleopatra. It was to be his undoing.

YOUNG ANTONY, c. 83–60 BC

Shortly after his death in 30 BC, Antony's birthday, 14 January, was declared *nefastus*, which means unholy or, at best, unlucky. On days that had been declared *nefastus*, no public business could be transacted in Rome. There could be various reasons why a day should be so designated, but in this instance the necessary legislation had been passed by a compliant Senate acting on the orders of Octavian, the victor of the battle of Actium and the conqueror of the Ptolemaic kingdom of Egypt. These victories gave Octavian, the new Caesar, complete power over the Roman world. He controlled all the armies, probably about sixty legions in all, comprising his own and those that had been raised by Antony. He claimed Egypt as his own province, which provided him with unimaginable wealth and the means to pay off the troops and settle some of them on the land. He retained command of a much-reduced army of twenty-eight legions and converted them into the first standing army of Rome.

After the battle of Actium there was no one left in the Roman world with sufficient power, influence, or money to challenge Octavian. Although he had little to fear now that Antony was dead and his supporters had been removed or won over, there remained the problem of self-justification. Octavian had waged a civil war against another Roman general, albeit a war disguised as a foreign one against a foreign enemy, Cleopatra, but now that hostilities were ended he preferred to obtain and retain supremacy by influence rather than brute force. He needed to convince the Romans of the great danger that would have faced the state if Antony and Cleopatra had been allowed to take over the whole Roman world and if he, Octavian, had shirked his duty, neglecting to engage such insidious enemies in combat to the death. Therefore he was determined to have Antony's memory damned forever (in Latin, *damnatio memoriae*). After the turmoil of the prolonged civil wars it was worth sacrificing Antony for the sake of peace, and most Romans concurred. There were few champions to speak up for Mark Antony and it would have been a useless exercise anyway, since posthumous praise would not bring him back. Antony's descendants were not victimized because of their connections with him. Most of them were brought into the family of Octavian, and elevated to high rank, but even when Octavian had achieved virtual sole rule in 27 BC and had been transformed into

Augustus, he would not yield and reverse the process, restoring Antony's memory. It was left to one of Antony's descendants to do that. It was his grandson, the Emperor Claudius, who achieved the reversal of Antony's *damnatio memoriae*.

Although Mark Antony's birthday is well attested, no one knows precisely in which year he was born. His birth will have been recorded at Rome, but it attests to his relative obscurity that it was not noted by his contemporaries. During his youth, he showed little promise of greater things to come, so his age and past history did not really matter. He achieved his fame (or infamy, depending on one's point of view) as an adult in the shadow of Julius Caesar. None of the ancient authors who concerned themselves with his exploits could conclusively elucidate his year of birth, and there is contradiction in the sources about how old he was when he committed suicide in 30 BC. One tradition states that he was fifty-six years old, another that he was fifty-one. The scenario is further complicated because Appian says that in 41 BC, when Cleopatra sailed to Tarsus to meet with Antony, he was forty years old. In order to accommodate all the information, which can hardly be called evidence, three different dates have been suggested for Antony's birth: 86, 83, and 81 BC. Most modern scholars opt for the middle date of 83 BC, which accords well with the timescale of his various appointments in his political career under Caesar's wing.

Mark Antony was born in turbulent times. Wars and civil disorder were almost normal, and assassination of eminent or troublesome politicians was not unusual. His family background must be set in its historical context to illustrate the sort of life to which he could aspire, and to contrast that with what he finally achieved. The Antonii were plebeian nobles, of moderate importance. The old struggle of the orders between patricians and plebeians that had plagued the early Republic had long since ended, and plebeians had gained access to the Senate and the major magistracies. Prestige in Rome in Antony's day was based on wealth, and senatorial ancestry, preferably of the highest rank. It was important to be able to boast of consuls and censors in one's family tree, and the so-called new men (*novi homines*) like Marcus Tullius Cicero, the first of his family to become a senator, were looked down upon by the snobbish Roman upper classes.

Antony's mother was Julia, daughter of the patrician Lucius Julius Caesar. As a member of the Julii Caesares, Lucius was distantly related to Gaius Julius Caesar. With such a background, as the descendant of plebeian and patrician nobles, Antony could look forward to a senatorial career, but perhaps only a mildly distinguished

one, since in Antony's youth the Antonii were not fabulously wealthy or influential in political circles. The first Antonius to reach the consulship was Antony's grandfather, in 99 BC. This Marcus Antonius had risen to prominence as an orator and lawyer. Skill in these professions was a great asset in ancient Rome, where the path to fame and glory often began in the law courts. Antonius had military experience as well, having been sent to Cilicia from 113 to 112 BC, to combat the ever-present menace of the pirates who were based there. After his consulship, he was appointed as one of the two censors for 97 BC. The censorship was an extremely prestigious office. Not many senators achieved such high status. These high-ranking officials were responsible for taking the census every five years, and for registering the people in their voting tribes. They were also responsible for overseeing public morals, and could eject men from the Senate if they were deemed unsuitable.

Mark Antony and his grandfather never knew each other. Ten years after his censorship, Marcus Antonius was killed in the proscriptions of 87 BC, having fallen into the wrong camp during the struggle between Gaius Marius and Lucius Cornelius Sulla. The background to this struggle requires brief explanation because it had great bearing upon the careers of Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus (Pompey the Great) and Gaius Julius Caesar, and after them the lives of Antony and Octavian.

Gaius Marius was the famous general who had saved Rome from the invasions of the Celtic peoples who swept down from the north in the late second century BC. Marius was a parvenu, not politically experienced, but as a general he was supreme, taking the field year after year in the war against the Celts. He was elected to the consulship six times and, most unusually during the war with the Celtic tribes, he was elected by the people to successive consulships without even appearing in Rome. This was both unprecedented and not strictly constitutional, but in times of danger the will of the people prevailed.

When the external threats from the Celtic tribesmen were eradicated, there was internal strife, resulting in the Social War (from the Latin for allies, *socii*) which broke out in 90. Rome's Italian allies, hitherto outside the Roman state, went to war in order to gain enfranchisement and proper integration in the Roman world. Rome was churlish at first, perfectly willing to sacrifice Italians for her own protection but then unwilling to confer on them the benefits of Roman citizenship. Lucius Cornelius Sulla was an impoverished aristocrat who fought against the Italian rebels, and gained the consulship in 88. By then most of the internal fighting was over and citizenship was

granted to the Italians who had remained loyal. The civil war was eclipsed because a new danger was looming. King Mithradates of Pontus had invaded territories in Asia, which Rome claimed as her own preserve. The province of Asia was wealthy and therefore enormously profitable, and could not be given up lightly. There were no Roman armies to stop Mithradates on the spot, so the search began for a suitable general to send against him. This was where Sulla and Marius clashed, because both of them wanted the command. In the end Sulla obtained it, and left Rome to the mercy of his opponents. One of the consuls for 87 was Lucius Cornelius Cinna, who brought Marius back to Rome. Between them they proscribed and caused the massacre of leading senators who were considered dangerous.

The casualties included the senior members of Antony's family on both his father's and his mother's side. When he discovered that his name was on the lists of the proscribed, the elder Marcus Antonius left Rome and took refuge in a rural area on a farm. It may have been possible to escape detection long enough for the bloodletting to end. Unfortunately, the farmer who was hiding him sent a slave to the local inn to buy a rather better quality wine than he normally drank, and the fact was noted by quick-witted customers, who extracted information from the slave about who was living with his master. It was only a matter of time before Marius was informed. Soldiers were sent. Antonius confronted them and tried his eloquence on them to persuade them to spare him, but the officer in command of the detachment began to wonder why it was taking so long to dispatch Antonius, and did so himself.

Another victim was Antony's maternal grandfather, Lucius Julius Caesar. Thus by the time that Antony was born both his maternal and paternal grandfathers were dead, a factor which would have a considerable part to play in Antony's make-up. In Roman factional politics, neutrality was not an option for men who wanted to rise via a senatorial career, and the deaths of Marcus Antonius and Lucius Julius Caesar provided a clear indication of the dangers of associating with the wrong factions and the advantages of seeking inclusion in the right ones.

The internal struggles in Rome did not end with the proscriptions and the timely demise of Marius. When Sulla finished off the war against Mithradates and returned to Rome in 83, another civil war broke out between Sulla's partisans and those who still followed the policies of Marius. It was during this war that a young general shot to fame by raising a private army from among his tenants on his estates in Picenum and leading it in support of Sulla. This was Gnaeus Pompey, who was soon to add the epithet Magnus ('the Great') to his

name. Modesty never helped anyone in the Roman world, so Pompey never cultivated it. By a combination of self-advertisement and military successes Pompey became one of the most powerful men that Rome had ever seen. He took his first steps to fame in the shadow of Sulla, who was made Dictator and set about overhauling the state, placing the Senate firmly in control and wresting power from the people. When his work was done Sulla laid down his office and retired, an action which Julius Caesar could not comprehend, and labelled ill-advised and foolish. The way was now cleared for the rise of Pompey, who was temporarily removed from the immediate political scene, to go and fight the rebel Quintus Sertorius, who had set himself up as a virtual autocrat in Spain. Pompey was thus occupied from 77 to 73.

While this Spanish war was going on, Marcus Antonius, the father of three boys, Mark Antony and his younger brothers Gaius and Lucius, was praetor in 74. At the end of his term of office he was given a command against the pirates in Crete, but he suffered a serious defeat. He earned the nickname Creticus, which would normally signify a victorious campaign, but in his case it was a derogatory epithet. He did not have to live with the failure, however. He was killed while still in office in 71. Antony, now aged about eleven, was fatherless, and moreover had to contemplate his future life dogged by extreme disadvantages. His father had been defeated in battle, and had left the family in chronic debt, so severe that Antony refused to accept the negative inheritance left to him by his father.

Antony's father was dismissed as an impulsive and disorganised failure, and the stories about him were readily accepted because they demonstrate so aptly the old adage 'like father, like son'. One of the most famous tales demonstrates his fecklessness but also his generosity. A friend called on him to ask for a loan, but Antonius had no money to spare. Resourceful as well as irresponsible, he sent a slave to fetch a silver dish, which he presented to his friend, telling him to sell it and keep the money. All went well until a short time later, when Julia missed the dish and started to question the slaves, accusing them of theft, at which point Antonius confessed his guilt. Julia's reaction is not recorded, but the unwritten subtext is that she was accustomed to this behaviour and perhaps condoned it, making the best of the situation in which she found herself.

As a widow with three young sons, Julia did not remain unmarried for long. Her next husband was Publius Cornelius Lentulus Sura, a senator of some standing, who was consul in 71. Antony and his brothers were brought up in Lentulus' house, and they seem to have been fond of their stepfather. The marriage was theoretically a

good match for Julia, and could have laid the foundations of a significant career for Antony, if only Lentulus had been in the right faction, and had enjoyed a better reputation.

The consuls for 70 were Pompey and Marcus Licinius Crassus, whose recent exploits gave them the dubious distinction of saving the state from the slave army led by Spartacus. Crassus had done most of the work, and Pompey had mopped up the remnants as they fled northwards into the path of his army as he returned from Spain. Pompey's reputation as a general was secure, but Crassus had not enjoyed the same experience. Although he had defeated the slaves under Spartacus, it was not considered a glorious victory because slaves were not supposed to be worthy enemies of Rome. Crassus therefore continually sought a more-dignified command that would bestow upon him the military distinction that he craved.

The consuls were not popular with the senators, who distrusted Crassus. Pompey, as always, was in an anomalous position. Up to now his career had been wholly abnormal. He had not held any of the requisite preliminary offices, having bypassed the usual stages of the quaestorship and praetorship and gone on to become a self-appointed general instead. Consequently he had no administrative experience, and he had to persuade his literary friend Varro to write a little handbook for him on senatorial procedure. Moreover, he was under the qualifying age for the consulship, and not only that, he was quite blatantly intent on undoing Sulla's work in strengthening the Senate. As part of this policy he needed to remove from power most of Sulla's supporters, or indeed anyone who had not demonstrated loyalty to his own party.

It was at Pompey's insistence that censors were appointed to revise the list of senators. At least his malice was confined to the ruination of men's careers rather than the eradication of potential opposition by proscriptions and deaths. In 70 Lentulus Sura and Antony's uncle Gaius Antonius Hybrida were forced out of the Senate and had to begin their careers all over again. Antonius Hybrida, brother of Marcus Antonius Creticus, had a shady reputation. He was also a born survivor. Ejected from the Senate in 70, he began his career again, becoming praetor in 66, reaching the consulship with Cicero as colleague in 63.

As a young man, Antony's circumstances were far from ideal, conveying the potential but little actual hope of a brilliant future. He started life as a bankrupt because of his father's debts. His stepfather Lentulus Sura had been pushed far back along the path to a lucrative career. It was too late now to begin to make overtures to Pompey, the one man in Rome who counted for anything and could influence the

Senate, and in any case by inclination Lentulus did not wish to be associated with Pompey. It took the best part of a decade for Lentulus to achieve significant appointments. His recovery was far slower than that of Antonius Hybrida, but by 63, Lentulus had worked his way slowly upwards and had become urban praetor, which was a lowly enough post for a man who had been consul eight years earlier.

While he was growing up, Antony could hardly have been unaware of factional strife in Rome, and by observation he would note how it was possible to rise to power via command of armed forces. A successful general would always be popular whenever there were enemies of Rome to subdue and Pompey went from strength to strength doing precisely that. First, he had himself appointed to command against the pirates in the Mediterranean, for which he needed special dispensation to grant him the power and authorisation to give orders to the provincial governors of territories all round the periphery of the sea. This was in effect most of the whole Roman world. Such an extended command made perfect sense, since the previous piecemeal attempts to eradicate the pirates had so far proved ineffective, or only temporarily successful. There was a definite need for an extensive unified command covering the whole of the Mediterranean and the coastal bases where the pirates could take refuge, but such a command would set a dangerous precedent.

Pompey was given all that he asked for, and he was as good as his word. He divided the Mediterranean into sectors, placed squadrons in each of them, and made rapid sweeps of them all. In less than two months he had rounded up all the pirates and made the Roman world safe, securing the food supply in the process. His next project was even more ambitious. He angled to deprive Lucullus of the eastern command against Mithradates, where the campaign was not going well. Between 66 and 63 BC, Pompey brought forcible peace to the eastern provinces and made arrangements for the future administration of the whole area.

Meanwhile, events at Rome moved on apace. There were many discontented men in the city. One of them was Crassus, the consular colleague of Pompey, who envisaged his own reputation constantly whittled away by Pompey's resounding and continuing successes. Crassus schemed to add military glory to his vast fortune in order to provide a counterweight to the overbearing influence of the Pompeians in Rome. Another restless soul was the new man called Marcus Tullius Cicero, regarded with disdain by the establishment, who was gaining fame via his work in the law courts and was clearly aiming for the consulship. The most dangerous of all, though perhaps only the most observant men realised it, was a rising politician, a

relative of Gaius Marius, who was anxious to obtain power in whatever way he could get it, and was drawn to Crassus as his financial backer. This was Gaius Julius Caesar, not yet a name to reckon with in Roman politics.

Besides these ambitious men, there were many dispossessed and impoverished citizens in Rome such as Marians who had suffered at the hands of Sulla, and those like Antony's stepfather and uncle, who had fallen victim to Pompey's purge, via the censors, of the Senate. The situation was ripe for rebellion for any number of personal or political reasons. All that was required was a suitably qualified and disgruntled leader to take up an inflammatory cause. According to Marcus Tullius Cicero, such a man emerged in the form of Lucius Sergius Catilina, who was thwarted of the consulship in 65. He presented himself as a candidate for the elections in 64 for the consulship of 63. The other candidates were Antony's uncle Gaius Antonius Hybrida and Cicero himself. The Senate was presented with a problem. The senators did not really want any of these candidates. They would just about tolerate Hybrida, but they did not want Cicero. Their dilemma was that they wanted Catilina even less, so Hybrida was duly elected along with Cicero, who therefore achieved his life's ambition and set about saving the state.

Until now, Catilina had enjoyed the financial support of Crassus, but Crassus did not back losers for long, so his support was withdrawn. Desperate now, Catilina started to raise troops. Having failed to attain power by legitimate political means he resorted to armed force. This is where Antony's stepfather enters the scene. Lentulus tried to subvert a party of Gallic tribesmen, the spokesmen of the Allobroges who had come to Rome to appeal to the Senate for redress for wrongs. When they were unsuccessful, Lentulus judged that they might be converted to the cause and if so then they could perhaps provide some of their famed mounted warriors to add to Catilina's growing army. Unfortunately he miscalculated. After some soul-searching the Allobroges informed their patron. Meanwhile they were persuaded to play the parts of double agents, leading the conspirators on until the case was quite clear and the consul Cicero could act.

Catilina escaped to fight again, but the ringleaders were arrested and brought before the Senate. Gaius Julius Caesar, who was now Pontifex Maximus (High Priest), spoke in favour of a mild penalty, namely imprisonment under close supervision in the Italian towns. No one heeded him because hysteria had taken too strong a hold. The moment was Cicero's finest hour. He had discovered a conspiracy, patiently watched it grow until it reached the point of no return, then

he had arrested the culprits and he was not to be cheated of their deaths. He carried the day and the conspirators were executed immediately. Lentulus was strangled.

Cicero ought to have gone through the laborious legal procedure, arranging for proper trials with prosecution and defence, but he was in too much of a hurry, perhaps because as a lawyer he knew that there were many problems to be encountered between prosecution and conviction. Condemnation was not a foregone conclusion, especially if a brilliant speaker could be found to plead the cause of the conspirators. If Cicero risked going through the proper procedure, the end result might be very far from the punishment he so desired.

Following the executions, Antony always declared that Lentulus' body was not released to the family for proper burial except after an interview with Cicero's wife Terentia to ask her to plead with her husband. Ancient authors did not believe the story, insisting that all the men who had been condemned as criminals were allowed decent funerals. This may be quite true but misses the point. Antony believed that Cicero would go so far as to deny his stepfather a Roman funeral. In emotional circumstances such as these, the truth is of no importance. Antony was about nineteen years old, grieving for his stepfather and no doubt distressed on account of the suffering of his mother. He had no money, no career prospects, and had perhaps been a party to the despair that drove Lentulus to try to alter the way the state was functioning. All that Antony would be able to see was a man who had enjoyed an honourable career suddenly blocked from promotion and then cut down when he tried to protest. Logic would not enter into his calculations; the man who had caused the death of his stepfather without a fair trial was Marcus Tullius Cicero, a new man from outside Rome, who was no better than the Antonii or the family of Lentulus. It was unlikely that Antony would ever forgive him.

As a result of the suppression of the so-called Catilinarian conspiracy, two important characters had now entered Antony's life, and from now on would have considerable influence on his future. Cicero was already an enemy. But the incident had also produced a potential ally. Gaius Julius Caesar had risked his reputation and perhaps even his life by speaking in favour of a lighter penalty for the conspirators. He could have jeopardised his own career, or found himself accused of complicity in the plot, but none the less he spoke out in public, in effect pleading for the lives of condemned men. Although Antony's mother, Julia, was a member of the family of the Julii Caesares, it is not known whether she approached Caesar for help as her husband's life was threatened, but her subsequent active history

in speaking up for herself and for others suggests that she may have done so.

Possibly at this time, perhaps after the death of his stepfather, Antony married for the first time. Some authors date the marriage to the next decade, in 53 or 52. His bride was his cousin Antonia, daughter of Antony's uncle, the consul of 63, Gaius Antonius Hybrida. Marriage into this family was not necessarily a shrewd political move and may not even have been a profitable alliance for Antony either in 63 or 62 or ten years later. Hybrida had never enjoyed an unsullied reputation. When the news of the Catilinarian conspiracy broke out he tried to remain on the fence but was finally forced into activity to avoid charges of sympathising with the conspirators. It was rumoured that he had associated rather too closely with Catilina two years earlier when Catilina failed to be elected consul in 65. In 62 Hybrida as ex-consul took the field at the head of an army against Catilina but the battle was won by his legate Marcus Petreius, allegedly because Hybrida was laid low by an attack of gout. Despite his action in suppressing Catilina, suspicion still attached to Hybrida.

A daughter, Antonia, was born of Antony's marriage to the daughter of Hybrida. The date is not established but was probably after 54 and before 49, which could be said to argue against the earlier date of 63 or 62 for the marriage, leaving more than nine years before a child was born. Or perhaps the younger Antonia was the first to survive infancy. Not much is known about her except that she was betrothed to the son of Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, who shared power with Antony and Octavian in the second triumvirate. There was no marriage, however, as Lepidus and his son fell from favour. By this time Antony was reorganising the eastern provinces and the kingdoms friendly to Rome and he used his daughter to cement an arrangement with Pythodorus, a Greek from Tralles in Asia Minor.

According to Cicero, Antony had a liaison with another lady called Fadia at some time during his youth. He may even have married her, most likely before he married Antonia. Fadia was the daughter of a freedman, Quintus Fadius. Cicero mentions the marriage in the *Philippics* in order to demonstrate Antony's predilection for the low life, since marriage between a noble and a woman so far below his class was definitely frowned upon. It is worth pointing out that some freedmen were able to amass fortunes far greater than any of the aristocratic families, so there may have been a dowry involved. Whether or not Antony had undergone a legal marriage there were children from this liaison, all acknowledged by Antony as his offspring. Nothing is known of them or their later lives.

Marriage and fatherhood did not seem to convert Antony into a

sedate family man. He was noted for drinking, gambling, and womanising in the company of his great friend the patrician Gaius Scribonius Curio, who was just as badly behaved but wealthier and better connected and therefore much more likely to emerge unscathed. Some ancient authors blame Curio for leading Antony astray but it is highly unlikely that Antony needed any encouragement in this sphere. It is characteristic of him that he tried to match expense for expense and escapade for escapade with no thought for the consequences. Proudly he refused to sit in the seats at the theatre reserved for bankrupts while at the same time incurring more and more debts, spending money on unnecessary trivia which enabled him to show off and entertain guests. Anyone who has ever been in a similar position will know that there comes a point where more debts cease to mean anything. The absolute remoteness of being able to repay any of the money simply invites further recklessness.

Curio offered to stand surety for Antony's debts, a gesture not to be underestimated and testimony to Antony's capacity to inspire friendship. This form of salvation did not come about since Curio's father found out and banished Antony from the house and his son's presence. The scenario has a modern flavour, familiar to all societies in all ages.

Antony never renounced Curio's friendship altogether, remaining on good terms with him until the latter's death. Cicero in the *Philippics* accuses Antony of homosexual relations with Curio, going on to suggest that he sold sexual favours to several other young men, but this was a standard derogatory charge that lost much of its impact through indiscriminate overuse. Julius Caesar was accused of the same thing and so was Octavian – by Antony himself, when the two were battling for supremacy after Caesar's death.

Deprived of Curio's company, Antony turned to another reprobate called Publius Claudius Pulcher, who changed his Claudian name in 59 to the plebeian form of Clodius, by which name he is known to posterity. His behaviour was always scandalous. He was said to have penetrated the festival celebrated in honour of the Bona Dea, the Good Goddess, observed exclusively by women. It was always held in the house of an influential figure and in that particular year it was hosted by Julius Caesar, who was Pontifex Maximus. In order to carry out his design, whatever it was, Clodius dressed as a woman and tried to take part in the ceremonies, but he was discovered by Caesar's mother, Aurelia. It was said that he was having an affair with Caesar's wife Pompeia, so without waiting to find out if this was true Caesar divorced her, famously saying that 'Caesar's wife should be above suspicion'. However, a great deal of suspicion attaches to the incident.

For reasons best known to himself, Caesar would not assist Cicero in the prosecution of Clodius. The trial went ahead with Cicero testifying against Clodius, who said he had not even been in Rome that night. Enough members of the jury preferred to believe him, having been well paid by Clodius himself via a loan from Crassus. The only result of the trial was that Clodius, even though he was not convicted, became a bitter enemy of Cicero.

Antony's activities are not documented during these years. He seems not to have figured in the scandal of the Bona Dea. But he would certainly have met Clodius' wife Fulvia, and may even have begun an affair with her, as was alleged by his enemies. Fulvia may have attracted him for several more elevated reasons, as well as sex, since he eventually married her and seems to have been fond of her to the point of indulgence.

Apart from these few conjectures, nothing is known of Antony's life at this period. He would be a witness to the return of Pompey from the war against Mithradates and there was much to learn from the experience. Pompey did not march on Rome at the head of his troops but disbanded them quietly and then entered Rome, confident that the sheer magnitude of his achievements and his undoubted supremacy would facilitate all his eastern administrative arrangements and the provision of land allotments for his veterans. He was to be sadly disillusioned. He had enriched the Roman Treasury by enormous amounts, but got no credit for it, and the Senate would not ratify his acts without first debating endlessly each minor point. More and more frustrated, and beginning to lose face, Pompey was drawn towards Crassus and Caesar, all of whom needed each other in some way to advance their own careers. Crassus and Pompey were old rivals but sank their differences to work to mutual advantage. There was no official agreement between them and Caesar, but the Romans recognised what was going on. One of these men, relatively unimportant as yet, would have an enduring effect on Antony's career.

CAESAR, 60–54 BC

Caesar had meanwhile launched himself on his political career. He had been praetor in 62 and governor of Further Spain from 61 to 60, and in that short time he had managed to raise the cash to pay off his considerable debts, most of which had been settled by Crassus, though it is not known on what terms. It was normal practice in Rome to recoup the expenses of election to office by governing a province, although some governors went too far and exploited the provincials so harshly that they were prosecuted on their return to Rome. Convictions were rare because the senators closed ranks and protected each other, but Caesar avoided a charge of extortion. He probably accepted cash and other so-called gifts, and he made war on the bandits of the wild country of Lusitania, putting an end to their depredations on the countryside.

On his return from Spain, Caesar demanded a triumph for his military exploits in making the province peaceful. He also demanded the right to stand for the consulship of 59 while still at the head of his triumphing army. As a returning general at the head of troops he was not allowed to cross the *pomerium*, the boundary of the city, so he kicked his heels outside Rome while the Senate considered and then refused his request for a triumph. Quite unruffled, he readily abandoned the idea of holding a triumph, and threw himself instead into the more important matter of canvassing for election to the consulship, backed by Pompey and Crassus. He was duly elected, with Marcus Calpurnius Bibulus as colleague, but he was soon acting almost independently, ignoring Bibulus and most of the Senate. The Romans recorded each year by the names of the two consuls, but this year, instead of the consulship of Caesar and Bibulus, some ready wits referred to the consulship of Julius and Caesar.

Not all Caesar's actions were selfish, even though he acted in a blatantly dictatorial manner. His capacity for recognising the need for administrative reforms and then for pushing them through revealed itself very early. At long last, Pompey's eastern arrangements were ratified en bloc. A dynastic marriage was arranged to bind Pompey and Caesar closer together. As soon as he returned to Rome, Pompey had divorced his wife Mucia on the grounds of her supposed infidelity. He was now the most eligible bachelor in the world, so Caesar offered him the hand of his only child Julia. The match was a successful one;

Pompey was known to dote on his new wife. Caesar himself arranged his own appointment as governor of the province of Cisalpine Gaul and Illyricum, which would once again give him command of troops. The command was extended when the governor of Transalpine Gaul died in office and at Pompey's suggestion the extra province was granted to Caesar with one more legion. The conquest of Gaul was to lay a firm foundation for Caesar's supremacy, and ultimately launched Antony on his career as Caesar's adherent and eventually second in command.

The unofficial alliance between Crassus, Pompey, and Caesar had proved itself stronger than the Senate. It remained for them to reduce the power of their individual and mutual rivals. To this end, Marcus Porcius Cato, who had delighted in dissecting each and every one of Pompey's eastern administrative arrangements, was sent to take over Cyprus. Cicero too was removed from Rome, not by an official appointment but by banishment. The newly appointed tribune of the plebs, Clodius, brought about Cicero's downfall. Caesar had presided over the necessary adoption of Clodius into a plebeian family, since as a patrician he was not eligible for the tribunate. It was an absolutely shameless piece of unscrupulous manipulation of the regulations for purely personal and selfish reasons. Once in office, Clodius passed a law that was aimed directly at Cicero. Anyone who had put to death Roman citizens without due process of law was to be outlawed. Cicero's haste in executing the Catilinarian conspirators now rebounded on him. In the political climate of Rome he suddenly found himself out on a limb with no friends; he tried to visit Pompey, who saw him approaching and fled by the back door as Cicero was shown in at the front. Before he could be prosecuted Cicero went into voluntary exile at Thessalonika. His banishment was formally ratified after his departure and his houses were destroyed. He was convinced that Antony had been one of the prime movers behind his banishment. This may have been true, but it is far from certain that Antony had any influence whatsoever at this stage. Cicero had made himself an enemy of too many people to require Antony's assistance in his loss of favour. Whether or not he was party to Cicero's fate, it is not likely that Antony would have shed any tears of sympathy.

Caesar waited in Rome until Cicero had left Italy and then departed for Gaul. In that same year, 58, Antony went to Greece, to study at Athens. It was said that he had tired of Clodius' excesses, and in fact it seems that there had been a rift of some sort between Clodius and Antony. When they met in Rome years later, Antony threatened his erstwhile friend with violence, chasing him with drawn sword into an upstairs room in a bookshop, where he stopped short of killing

him. At any rate, it is fortunate that Antony had quite decidedly detached himself from the entourage of Clodius well before the latter was attacked and killed by his rival Milo in 52. Clodius' wife Fulvia did not remain a widow for very long. She married Antony's other great friend Scribonius Curio.

In the same year that Antony left Rome for Athens, Julius Caesar took up his post as governor of Gaul – not just the Cisalpine province as originally arranged, but with the connivance of Pompey he was assigned to the whole of Gaul, including the large part not yet conquered and Romanised. Clearly there was opportunity for glory and self-advancement for anyone who accompanied Caesar, but it is not known whether Antony was invited. He had little experience to recommend him, not being a proven soldier or politician, but nor were the other young men who went with Caesar to conquer the Gauls. Roman officers were not trained in military colleges, and though there were manuals on the subject of warfare it was not considered necessary to have studied them before accepting appointments. Who you knew, rather than what you knew, was all that counted. Caesar was distantly related to Antony's mother, and will have been aware of the twenty-five-year-old young man, but he may have considered that Antony's profligate behaviour, his bankruptcy, his addiction to wine, and his disreputable friends, all combined to make him unreliable. On the other hand, it may be that far from snubbing Antony, Caesar invited him to join his staff and Antony refused, not yet knowing where his future lay. The fact that he did not accompany Caesar in 58 but joined him a few years later only serves to emphasize his alleged aimlessness, and without further elucidation no one can say why he went to Athens instead of Gaul in 58. If he wanted to get away from Rome either option would have served the purpose, so it is likely that freedom, education, literature and the arts were more attractive to him than military success.

At Athens, Antony's course of study, according to Plutarch, consisted of military exercises and the practice of the florid Asiatic style of oratory which was so suited to Antony's character, being full of swagger and melodrama. Antony would have absorbed, as part of his family history, the fact that his grandfather had been a distinguished orator, and would presumably have been proud to follow in his footsteps. His academic progress is unknown, but he perhaps applied himself to his studies as well as to the life of a carousing student. His time in Athens cannot have been personally disastrous, and in later life he was always fond of the city and lived there for months at a time when he was in command of the eastern provinces.

The sort of training that Antony underwent in Athens was part of the normal education of Roman youths, some of whom went to Rhodes rather than Athens, but the purpose was the same: to gain the ancient equivalent of a modern university education. Oratory and military experience would help in Antony's future career. The main problem is that there is no evidence that he had planned a career of any sort. He was twenty-five years old, and had come to Athens rather later than most Roman youths. He seemed to have no particular aims in life, and no money, perhaps not even enough to embark on a political career, unless he was to associate closely with a wealthy and influential politician. In 58 that would be Pompey, no friend to the Antonii, or Crassus, and while there is some evidence that Antony and his friends Curio and Clodius may have been lukewarm supporters of Crassus, the association cannot have been close. When Crassus came to the east to embark on his ill-fated Parthian campaign Antony did not join him.

Antony's ambitions were tested when Aulus Gabinius arrived in Greece on his way to take up his post as governor of Syria. Apart from a few activities taken on his own initiative, Gabinius was plainly Pompey's man. As tribune in 67, he had passed the necessary laws to bestow on Pompey the unprecedented command against the pirates. It was Clodius as tribune who had arranged for the appointment of Gabinius as governor of Syria, replacing Pompey's legate Scaurus. The province had been conquered by Pompey and added to the Roman world, acting as a buffer against the Parthian kingdom to the east, and as such it was a very important command.

Gabinius stopped off in Athens on his way to take up this command, and invited Antony to accompany him to Syria. It is likely that this was not a chance encounter. Gabinius may have sought out Antony deliberately. There may have been a family connection, since it is suggested that one of Gabinius' ancestors may have served in Cilicia in 102, as quaestor to Marcus Antonius the orator, Antony's grandfather, when he conducted his campaign against the pirates. At first Gabinius may have offered Antony an administrative post, but this seemingly did not tempt him. When Gabinius exchanged this offer for a command in the Roman cavalry Antony came into his own. Whatever he had decided on as his future, it was crystallised now when he left Greece with Gabinius. They travelled together to Antioch, where they were greeted with the news that there was a civil war in Judaea. The situation there was volatile and called for Roman intervention – to protect the interests of Rome as much as the citizens of Judaea.

It was within the brief of the governor of Syria to re-establish

order in Judaea. The problem dated back to Pompey's conquest. In 63, when he was reorganising the whole of the east, Pompey had put an end to the ongoing civil war between the two brothers Aristobulus and Hyrcanus, deciding in favour of Hyrcanus, who was set up as High Priest of the Jews and ethnarch, or ruler. Aristobulus and his sons, Alexander and Antigonus, were taken to Rome, where they marched as defeated enemies in Pompey's triumph, and were then imprisoned. All was well until 57, when Alexander escaped from prison in Rome and raised an army in Judaea. He declared himself High Priest and king, and took over Jerusalem and other strongholds in Judaea, which he started to rebuild. Pompey had ordered the destruction of the walls of Jerusalem, so Alexander repaired them, and fortified Alexandrium (also referred to as Alexandreion in Greek, or Alexandrinum), which stood in the hills guarding the road to Jericho. Near the point where the river Jordan flows into the Dead Sea, Alexander also fortified two sites called Hyrcanium and Machaerus. All these places were to feature in Antony's first military actions.

Once they had arrived in Judaea, Antony was sent ahead with the cavalry and some light armed infantry to find Alexander's rebel army and then to wait for the arrival of the Roman troops. Gabinius' army chased Alexander until he turned and gave battle near Jerusalem, where he was defeated. He withdrew with his surviving troops to Alexandrium, which the Romans besieged. Antony was the first onto the wall when the fort was taken and was rewarded with the *corona muralis* (literally 'the wall crown'), always awarded to the first soldier to cross the enemy's wall in a siege. The Jewish author Josephus mentions Antony's exploits in his *Jewish Antiquities*. Antony also took part in the reduction of the strongholds of Hyrcania and Machaerus. It must be remembered that he had no formal military training to speak of except the rudimentary exercises that most Roman boys undertook and his studies at Athens, but at some point he had absorbed how to command soldiers, who may well have been more practised than he was himself, and what to do in emergencies. Antony was always good in a crisis.

Peace was restored in Judaea for a short time. Then it was disturbed all over again when Aristobulus himself, and his son, Antigonus, escaped from Rome, in a bid to re-establish their rule in Judaea. This time Gabinius stayed at Antioch and sent three commanders: his own son, Sisenna, Servilius, and Antony to deal with the situation. When Aristobulus was forced to flee from Alexandrium, he fell back towards the ruins of Machaerus, but he had to fight a battle on the way there, losing many of his men. He no doubt intended to rebuild the walls at Machaerus, but Antony led the assault

on the fort and town before fortifications could be erected. The first attack was inconclusive, but at the second attempt the Romans were victorious. Aristobulus and Antigonos were captured and sent to Gabinius' headquarters, and from there to imprisonment at Rome.

Hyrcanus was confirmed as High Priest, but this time he was not granted the title or functions of ethnarch. Instead there was to be a chief minister, with considerable power backed by Rome. This was Antipater, an Idumaean, greatly resented as a foreigner by the Jews. His more famous son, Herod, continued his authority. The whole country was divided up into five autonomous areas to be governed by local men, who were selected by Gabinius and therefore acceptable to the Romans and indebted to them for their positions of authority. To his credit, Gabinius prevented the Roman tax collectors from exploiting the Jews, but by doing so he made enemies in Rome.

On the southern border of Syria there were constant raids, or at least the threat of raids, by the Arab tribesmen who lived beyond the Roman province, so Gabinius next turned his attention to them, leading expeditions against them, even though it was illegal to do so without senatorial authority to act outside his province. He was planning further expeditions against the Parthians, which would perhaps have brought him glory and renown, and also given Antony an opportunity to earn a reputation for military expertise, if these plans had come to fruition. But more lucrative opportunities were on offer.

The exiled Egyptian ruler Ptolemy Auletes (which means the Flute Player) turned up at Gabinius' headquarters, allegedly offering lots of money if the Romans would wage war in Egypt to restore him to his throne. The Ptolemies had ruled Egypt for centuries. They were not native Egyptians but Greeks descended from the first Ptolemy, the companion of Alexander the Great, who marched back from the east after the death of Alexander to carve out a kingdom in Egypt, having first kidnapped the corpse of Alexander to install it in a famous tomb in the city named after him, Alexandria.

Ptolemy Auletes was the twelfth of his dynasty (sometimes listed as the eleventh, owing to a glitch in the descent of his predecessors). His track record was not encouraging. He had already received Roman assistance to keep him on his throne. While Caesar was consul in 59 he and Pompey had confirmed Auletes as ruler of Egypt, but at a price. In order to pay this price, Ptolemy increased existing taxes and raised new ones, which made him so unpopular that his own daughter, Berenice, raised rebellion and declared herself ruler. Ptolemy was forced to flee to Rome to seek help, with his debts still outstanding.

The Romans already controlled, indirectly, much of what went on in the kingdom of Egypt, because Roman influence and money had become the dominant factor in Egyptian politics. There was really nowhere else for Ptolemy to go, except to the men who had helped him before. In Rome, Pompey was sympathetic, but the Senate was not, and at this stage Pompey was not willing to compromise himself. Disconsolate, Ptolemy approached Gabinius at his headquarters in Antioch. His promise of payment for military assistance was a little shaky, because Ptolemy was still deeply in debt and did not have the cash to hand, but if the expedition was undertaken successfully he promised to raise the money once he was reinstalled as ruler of his country.

Tacitly, Pompey condoned the idea, and Gabinius may have thought that he could rely on Pompey's support. Technically, Gabinius had no authority to intervene. It was illegal for him to leave his province and to enter Egypt at all, much less to invade at the head of an army, but he was no doubt tempted by the fabulous wealth of the country. Antony too detected a whiff of romance and adventure. It was said that he was one of the most earnest supporters of the invasion of Egypt. In 55 Gabinius set about putting Ptolemy back on his throne.

It is not an easy task to invade Egypt by land, since it is protected on both sides by deserts, and the Nile Delta is an obstacle in itself, especially when patrolled by watchful ships. Antony crossed the desert with few casualties, and captured Pelusium, the gateway to Alexandria. Shored up by the Roman troops, Ptolemy Auletes was determined to wreak vengeance on the disloyal Egyptian inhabitants of Pelusium, but Antony managed to dissuade him, and thereby earned himself a reputation for courage and fair play. From Pelusium the Roman army fought and skirmished its way to Alexandria, where Auletes executed his daughter, Berenice, and her adherents.

Antony stayed in Alexandria for a while, impressing the inhabitants and even the Roman soldiers with his exploits. He was twenty-eight years old, athletic and handsome. It was said that he liked to show off his stalwart physique by wearing very short tunics. He was popular with his men, an acknowledged womaniser, generous to a fault, and he could drink anybody under the table.

It is possible that while he was in Alexandria Antony may have met the princess Cleopatra, one of the daughters of Ptolemy Auletes. She was about thirteen years old. Perhaps with the benefit of hindsight, she seems to have been the cleverest and the most circumspect of Ptolemy's unruly brood, but at this time she was probably overshadowed by her sisters and brothers. There was an

older sister, also called Cleopatra, labelled the sixth of that name, a younger sister called Arsinoe, and two young brothers, so there was very little in her situation that would presage her future greatness as Cleopatra VII. Antony may not even have noticed her, at least not as an outstanding member of the Ptolemaic dynasty. It was much later, when Caesar's influence, and then their own mutual needs, drew Antony and Cleopatra together, that the eternal combination began.

Perhaps if Antony had remained in Egypt for several months, an association of sorts between him and the young Cleopatra may have developed, but he was very soon on his way back to Judaea, where a second revolt against Hyrcanus broke out in the spring of 55. Gabinius reacted swiftly, and marched most of his troops out of Egypt to deal with the latest disorder. Before his departure, he prudently chose a small number of soldiers to remain in Egypt to protect Ptolemy Auletes and his family. These men earned the epithet 'Gabinians' and were to resurface some years later in the civil war between Caesar and Pompey. There was an ulterior motive in Gabinius' solicitous concern for Ptolemy, of course, since the Roman moneylender Rabirius Postumus was also due to arrive in Egypt in order to raise and collect the taxes that would pay off the loans he had made to reinstate Ptolemy the first time around. If Rabirius could conduct his tax gathering in safety, then the payment that had been promised to Gabinius would also be protected.

Antony and the cavalry went with Gabinius. The new rebellion organised by Aristobulus' son, Alexander, was put down in a fierce battle near Mount Tabor, where it was said that over 30,000 Jews had rallied to Alexander's cause. When the Judaeian revolt was quelled, Gabinius returned to his own province of Syria. Antony remained with him for another year, without recorded incident.

‘A LIMB OF CAESAR’, 54–48 BC

BRUTUS:

For Antony is but a limb of Caesar:

Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, II. i.

During Antony's absence from Rome there had been significant developments in the city. Cicero had returned from exile, recalled by the efforts of Pompey, who had deserted him in his hour of need but now worked to have him recalled. In 56 Caesar had taken time off from the conquest of Gaul and travelled to Cisalpine Gaul to meet Crassus. They probably worked out a few mutually beneficial schemes before Caesar went to Luca (modern Lucca) to meet Pompey. The so-called conference at Luca is usually described as a meeting of all three men together, but it has been suggested that Caesar met them individually, even though the programme they worked out was designed to meet their mutual needs. The little town of Luca was overcrowded with Caesar's and Pompey's followers and clients, while the two magnates held their meetings in secret. Between them they arranged the fate of the world. Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar possessed enough corporate influence to ensure that whatever they desired would happen, even to the extent of engineering the elections of magistrates. It was agreed that Crassus and Pompey should be consuls for 55, and that Caesar should be confirmed as governor of Gaul for another five years. There was a time limit on his command, but he had not yet succeeded in subduing all the tribes, and he had no intention of leaving the conquest half finished, because that would give someone else the chance to mop up what he had begun, and then take all the credit for it.

Crassus was already making plans for his proconsulship. After his term of office as consul ended, he was to govern Spain, and Pompey was to be governor of Syria, but Crassus saw his chance to make his mark in the east and these arrangements were reversed. As governor of Syria, Crassus intended to conquer Parthia, the one power that could rival or even outshine Rome in the extent of her Empire and in her sophisticated organisation. During his consulship, he began to recruit an army, promising them rich rewards, but when he left Rome

it was under a shadow and a curse. When he arrived in Syria, Crassus took over Gabinius' troops. Initially Gabinius refused to hand over his command, but Crassus was the legally appointed governor so he had no choice but to give in and return to Rome to face the consequences of leaving his province and invading Egypt. Gabinius must have known that he would soon be prosecuted, but perhaps relied on his association with Pompey to save him from condemnation.

Antony left Syria in the same year that Crassus arrived, but the chronology is not clear. It is not established whether he was offered any appointment under Crassus, or whether he simply did not want to serve under him. In the past, he and his friends had been vague adherents of Crassus, as the better alternative to joining Pompey, and Antony's uncle Hybrida had enjoyed the support of Crassus even when he had been discredited after his lack of success in defeating Catilina. Despite this tenuous family connection, it may be that the prospect of serving under Crassus in a Parthian campaign, which was a project never to be undertaken lightly, did not appeal to Antony. He can never be accused of cowardice, but perhaps prudence was uppermost in his mind.

One alternative to remaining in the east and joining Crassus was to return to Rome in the entourage of Gabinius, but Antony did not choose that option. He could see clearly what was in the wind on the political scene. Gabinius was prosecuted as soon as he reached Rome for leading his army out of Syria without authorisation from the Senate. This trial fizzled out and Gabinius was acquitted, but he was then promptly charged again on the grounds that he had accepted bribes from Ptolemy Auletes, who was alleged to have offered 10,000 talents if Gabinius would help him regain his throne. Possibly persuaded by Caesar, Cicero undertook the defence, against his will and not very well. Gabinius was ordered to repay the money that Ptolemy was alleged to have given him, but since he had received very little of it and had probably used what little he did receive to pay his expenses, he went into voluntary exile. He may have found it ironic, if not comforting, to know that Rabirius Postumus had failed to collect the necessary taxes in Egypt and had also fled into exile rather than face the angry Egyptian population.

Utilising a timely sense of self-preservation, Antony did not appear in Rome. It is said that he dared not face his creditors, which is quite likely since he had never been out of debt, but it is also likely that he knew that the Egyptian venture would draw criticism if not prosecution. Antony had been the only one of Gabinius' officers who had wholeheartedly supported the expedition into Egypt, and he had perhaps made a financial profit, or at least a potential profit, out of

the exploit. Given his ancestry and reputation in Rome, it was highly probable that some enterprising enemy would try to make a name for himself in the courts by prosecuting him. Antony deemed it wise to find employment elsewhere.

Via the overland route through Asia Minor and Greece, Antony travelled from Syria to Gaul to join the army of Caesar. He probably did not set off on this journey with the vague hope that Caesar would welcome him. Before he left Syria, or while he was travelling, he may have received an invitation from Caesar, or he may have contacted Caesar on his own account, possibly via one of the Caesarian generals in Gaul who could lay his case before Caesar. It was one of the usual methods of obtaining a post in any provincial governor's army to offer a letter of recommendation, like modern references offered at an interview for a job. Antony certainly had more to recommend him to Caesar than he would have had only a few years earlier. He had gained a classical education in Athens where he had studied oratory and with it the means of verbal persuasion that would be necessary in his political career. More important, he had gained military experience and had acquitted himself well in battle, being decorated and rewarded for his achievements.

The details of Antony's journey to Gaul and how he arrived there have not been recorded. He will doubtless have had slaves and perhaps friends with him, but none of this has been noted. Somehow and at some date he reached Caesar and became part of his army. He may have arrived in Gaul around the time that Caesar was busy invading Britain for the second time, but it is not recorded that Antony took part in this short campaign. Nothing is known of what he did for the next couple of years, but Antony eventually rose to a position of importance as one of Caesar's generals, or legates, which term does not at this stage denote the commander of a legion as it did later, during the Empire. An appointment as a Caesarian *legatus* was not a permanent arrangement, and commands could change from time to time. Legates were sometimes entrusted with semi-independent commands which called for initiative and courage, and could then be sent on other missions with different collections of troops.

It is not known by what process Antony arrived at this position of trusted officer, but he had served an unrecorded two-year apprenticeship under the eye of Caesar and presumably impressed the general sufficiently to gain promotion, but there is no word of his activities or achievements that brought him promotion. Antony first entered recorded history via Caesar's commentaries on the Gallic war, when he was already a fully fledged lieutenant in command of troops.

The years which Antony spent in Gaul with Caesar were eventful

ones for Rome. The marriage alliance between Caesar and Pompey was severed when Caesar's daughter, Julia, died in childbirth in 54. The child died too, so there was no family connection to be preserved that may have bound the two men together on a personal level. Politically, though Julia's death did not create an immediate rift between Pompey and Caesar, it removed a potential link and a possible soothing influence which her presence might have exerted upon her father and husband when it came to open war. The situation did not deteriorate overnight, but an almost inexorable, if gradual, rivalry was bound to separate Rome's greatest general from the brilliant, determined, ruthless, self-advertising conqueror of Gaul.

A year after the death of Julia, Marcus Licinius Crassus, the other rather less stable link between Pompey and Caesar, was removed from the scene, disastrously defeated and horrifically killed in Parthia. His dream of conquering the Parthian Empire was shattered and it left a potentially aggressive enemy bent on revenge hovering on the eastern boundary of the Roman world. Crassus lost most of his army and several standards were taken, to be retrieved much later by diplomatic means under Augustus in AD 20. It was said that Crassus died swallowing molten gold, forced down his throat by the Parthians in reference to his love of wealth, though this may be a fabrication, since other sources claim that no one knows who killed Crassus.

The Parthians were Rome's most organised enemy, and the prospect of subduing them was most glamorous, redolent of Alexander the Great and his eastern conquests. Antony was young, adventurous, and romantic. He knew something of the east already. Gabinius had been on the point of planning an invasion of Parthia when the Egyptian affair began, and had probably discussed it with Antony. All the substance that Antony needed for the development of a romantic dream was in place, and may have fostered plans for his own Parthian campaign much later, when he was in command of the eastern half of the Roman world. The defeat and death of Crassus begged for revenge, and the stain on Rome's prowess and military reputation could only be removed by a resounding victory. Antony and Caesar may have mulled over the situation, playing the Roman equivalent of war-gaming in conversations at dinner. The topic was probably never allowed to go out of fashion. When he was murdered in March 44, Caesar was about to set out on a campaign on the Danube which he intended to follow up with another against Parthia. He had raised the troops and the cash, and a few months earlier he had sent his great-nephew Gaius Octavius to Macedonia where five legions were stationed in readiness for these campaigns. It is likely that Caesar planned to take Antony with him to Parthia, and may have talked to

him about the country and the enemy army. If he knew at least something of Caesar's plans, Antony probably thought of himself as the heir to these projected conquests; at any rate it is highly unlikely that he ever forgot Crassus' Parthian disaster.

As long as Caesar devoted himself single-mindedly to the conquest of Gaul, the possibility of conflict between him and Pompey was postponed. Everything depended on what happened when Caesar's term as governor expired, but he waited upon events and did not yet show his hand. In the meantime he fostered Antony's career, allowing him to go to Rome in 53 to stand as a candidate for the quaestorship for 52. Shortly after arriving in the city, Antony went to see Cicero, who refers to the visit in the *Philippics*. Caesar had written to Cicero to ask him to receive Antony and support his candidature for the quaestorship. Twenty quaestors were elected each year, the posts being filled by aspiring young men, who automatically entered the Senate upon election, thanks to legislation passed by Sulla. The primary responsibility of the quaestors was in the financial sphere, in Rome and in the provinces. Some of the twenty young men carried out their functions in Italy, two of them at the temple of Saturn in Rome, where the treasury (*aerarium*) was housed. The remaining quaestors were sent out to the provinces, chosen by lot, to serve as assistants to the governors or the military commanders. They fulfilled a variety of tasks apart from financial duties. It was normal for the commander or governor to foster the careers of their quaestors, as Caesar did for some of his young assistants.

The election was to be a prolonged affair because there was considerable disorder in Rome, where violence and rioting disrupted all political and social life. No elections could take place in the circumstances, so Antony had to wait in the city until peace was restored and the elections for all political offices could be held. While he was there he met Clodius during a riot in the Forum. This is the infamous occasion when he drew a sword on his former friend and chased him into a bookshop. Afterwards, Antony claimed that he had attacked Clodius to avenge Cicero for the ignoble treatment that had been meted out to him when Clodius was tribune. He may have been sincere, but it must be remembered that he wanted Cicero's support for his election as quaestor. Likewise, Cicero may have been sincere when he praised Antony for his noble actions.

The reign of terror that Clodius had instigated in Rome ended when he clashed with his rival Titus Annius Milo, who had been recruited by Pompey to counter the activities of Clodius. The two rabble-rousers met by accident on 18 January 52, near a tavern on the Via Appia, and in the ensuing brawl Milo killed Clodius. The body was

brought into Rome, where the populace, who had loved Clodius because of the benefits that he bestowed on them, such as the free corn dole, reacted badly to his murder. They created such a funeral pyre for him that they managed to burn down the Senate House as well.

It was time for Pompey the Great to act. His usual response to a crisis was to ignore it until it was quite clear that he was the only man who could bring order out of chaos, and then when he had been asked to intervene he blazed into action and sorted everything out. He was made sole consul, a contradiction in terms for an office that was supposed to be a collegiate affair, but then Pompey was always an anomaly in Roman politics. He had no choice but to sacrifice Milo and bring him to trial, even though he had recruited him to combat Clodius and had promised to support him in the elections for the consulship. Antony, who had not long since threatened Clodius at sword point, now expressed great grief over his death. He claimed to be extremely supportive of the prosecution of Milo, and managed to talk about it for two hours. He used his oratorical talents and training to play to the gallery, and the people loved him for it.

Cicero was engaged for Milo's defence, but Pompeian soldiers were stationed all around the court, keeping the mob of Clodius' supporters at a distance, and this was not the occasion for one of Cicero's best defence speeches. His delivery certainly did not compare with the written version produced sometime later. Milo went into exile at Marseilles. He said that he was grateful, because otherwise he may never have tasted the excellent mullets there.

When order was restored, Antony was duly elected quaestor, at least partly on his own merits, but it was clear that he enjoyed Caesar's overt support. He was now properly launched upon his political career, and indelibly dyed as one of Caesar's men. He had not been promoted solely for his own benefit, and would be fully aware that Caesar would support and foster only those people who were likely to be useful to him. Anyone who might possibly damage the reputation that Caesar had been carefully cultivating as politician and military commander would be rejected out of hand.

Antony did not wait for the allocation of the quaestors by lot to find out where he was to be posted, but left hastily for Gaul to rejoin Caesar. No one seems to have protested, perhaps because there was still so much disorder in Rome, and in any case the Senate and the sole consul Pompey were probably glad to have Antony out of the way. The war in Gaul had come to a head. Caesar had chased the Gallic leader Vercingetorix to the hill fort at Alesia and bottled him up there. He built the famous siege works all around the hill complete

with timber towers, ditches, ramparts, and the *lilia* – pits containing sharpened stakes, covered up and disguised so that the unwary fell in and were impaled.

There was a double line of defences because the free Gauls who were not bottled up at Alesia arrived en masse and surrounded the Romans, so the besiegers were themselves besieged. An open plain lay before the hill fort, and Antony and Trebonius were stationed there to guard it. An inconclusive battle was fought here, breaking off at night, and then on the following night a concerted attack began, as the Gauls inside Alesia and those surrounding the siege works tried to break through from both sides. In his commentaries Caesar briefly describes how the *legati* Antony and Trebonius fought off this night attack on the siege works, having shrewdly anticipated trouble and kept their troops prepared for action so that they could be moved quickly to the most threatened point.

The last battle was hard fought, starting with a diversion in the plain and the main Gallic attack on one of the Roman camps further up the hill. Both the inner and outer defences were threatened, until Caesar ordered the cavalry to move round to attack the rear of the Gauls in the plain. These eventually fled in complete disorder, and did not return. Vercingetorix could not escape from Alesia and it was unlikely that he could raise more troops. Surrender was inevitable, so he rode into Caesar's camp and sat down in submission. He had put up a noble fight for his tribesmen and for the whole of Gaul, and did not deserve his fate, six years in a Roman prison and strangulation after marching in Caesar's triumph. Alesia was given up, and Caesar concentrated on subduing the rest of the tribes to ensure an uneasy peace.

During the winter of 52–51, Antony was put in charge of Caesar's winter quarters near Bibracte (modern Autun). The peace that had been imposed was not secure, so instead of retiring to Cisalpine Gaul until spring, as he usually did when the winter season began, Caesar made his headquarters at Bibracte. In December he went off on a rapid campaign against the Bituriges, whose lands were fertile and well-populated, and therefore provided a lucrative source of wealth and supplies. Antony probably saw no action until Caesar called him to his side to take command of the XII legion in a campaign against the Eburones, who dwelt between the river Meuse and the Rhine. Antony remained in northern Gaul, as commander of fifteen cohorts, the equivalent of one and a half legions.

It was in this part of Gaul, just south of the Rhine, that the last spark of Gallic resistance to Caesar and Roman domination finally died out. For some time the leader of the Atrebatres, Commius, had

resisted the Romans, liaising with the Germanic tribes across the Rhine, whose aid he sought more than once in his struggle. Whenever he was threatened with defeat or capture he simply fled across the Rhine to his allies, remaining just beyond the reach of the Roman legions. He was a constant thorn in Caesar's side, clever, resourceful, and justifiably bitter. He had made the mistake in the previous year of agreeing to talk to the Roman envoy Gaius Volusenus, not knowing that Caesar's friend and trusted lieutenant Titus Labienus had arranged an ambush. He escaped because the centurion appointed to kill him bungled the job, so Commius got away with a head wound and a lifelong grudge.

As commander of the northern region, Antony was bound to come into conflict with Commius, who used his swift horsemen in a perpetual guerrilla war, threatening communications and supply lines, without committing his men to battle. Antony's cavalry commander Gaius Volusenus was given the task of frustrating Commius' raids. The two met in a skirmish, in which Commius personally led the charge against the Roman horsemen, succeeding in wounding Volusenus in the thigh.

Despite this small success, Commius eventually came to terms with Antony, sending hostages to him as guarantee for his peaceful behaviour. Commius faced increasingly difficult circumstances. He could not sustain the guerrilla warfare because his tribesmen could not remain welded together for any length of time. Antony would be able to make an accurate judgement of the enemy situation, and accepted the peace terms. He could afford to be lenient. Commius was not taken prisoner, and Antony turned a blind eye when he migrated to Britain. The tribes of Gaul finally accepted Roman rule. Antony's contribution in ending the war may not have been of resounding military or historical importance, but it reveals that he could act on his own initiative, making arrangements to be ratified by Caesar, and was trusted to do so.

In 50 Antony was elected as augur at Rome, with Caesar's support. This was a religious office which he retained all his life. The college of augurs was of great antiquity, dating back to the time of the kings. Their numbers were fixed, originally at three, who were all patricians, then at nine when plebeian members were allowed to join. Sulla increased the college to fifteen members, who were by this time elected by the people when a vacancy occurred, usually at the death of one of the members, since the office was held for life. Antony may have sought the appointment in 53, because a vacancy had arisen after the death of Crassus' son in Parthia, but if he did stand for election at that time he obviously failed. In 50 the orator and augur

Quintus Hortensius died, creating a new vacancy, and on this occasion Antony was successfully elected. Caesar canvassed for his election vigorously and, as usual, Caesar's support won the day. Antony's main rival was Domitius, whose candidacy was favoured by Cato and the senatorial party, all of them anti-Caesarians to the last man. So Antony's success was all the more remarkable, but at this period Caesar experienced no difficulty in putting candidates of his own into political or religious offices. The duties of the augurs were to observe and interpret the heavenly signs from the gods, which could be revealed to them in the skies or in the flights of birds. Taking the auspices to assess the will of the gods was an important feature of Roman life, rooted in the distant past. The word auspices derives from *auspicium* or *avispicium*, denoting the observation of birds (*avis* means bird and *specio* means I look or I see). No magistrate would embark on serious business without taking the auspices first. So the augurs who were entrusted with interpretation of the signs could exert significant power over public life, because if they considered that the omens were unfavourable they could suspend all public business, or even retrospectively invalidate actions or decisions that had already been taken. With Antony as augur, there would have been several advantages of which Caesar could avail himself if ever need arose, even if only to extricate himself from temporary difficulties. For Antony, the appointment was not just an empty honour; it was a useful political tool. Whether he had any formal training in how to observe and interpret the movements of birds is largely irrelevant, and it is fairly certain that without the slightest hesitation he would interpret the signs in accordance with Caesar's wishes.

Antony's appointment as augur was aided and abetted by his old friend Curio, who was tribune in that year. Like Antony, Curio was Caesar's man, so the two friends worked towards the same end, namely protecting Caesar's interests. When Curio's term of office as tribune came to an end, it was important to replace him for the new term with another compliant Caesarian, so Antony in his turn became tribune for 49. The tribunes entered office on 10 December each year, before the consuls took up their office in the following January.

The year 49 was a crucial one for Caesar. The problems over his tenure of Gaul had already begun in 51 when the anti-Caesarian consul Marcellus suggested that Caesar should be recalled in that year. Pompey tried to put an end to vacillation and uncertainty and opted for a definite terminal date of 1 March 50, on the sensible grounds that the command of Gaul had been granted to Caesar for a second term of five years in 55. This postponed the thorny decision for a while, and clung firmly to the letter of the law – if such a description

can be applied to the more-or-less private agreement that had engineered the extension of Caesar's governorship. Whenever the matter was raised thereafter, Curio as tribune had consistently vetoed the proceedings if there was the slightest hint of a threat to Caesar, but such a state of affairs could not continue indefinitely. Caesar's enemies manoeuvred to find a new loophole as fast as his friends manoeuvred to close the last one. It was clear that there would be a clash of some kind between Pompey and Caesar, who could not work together any longer as equals. The state was not big enough to accommodate both of them. A dangerous precedent had been set of allowing Pompey to be consul in Rome while at the same time commanding troops as governor of his province of Spain. Such an anomalous pluralism had not been condoned in the past, and it now gave Caesar the excuse to claim that if he came to Rome to stand for the consulship, disbanding his army as he was legally obliged to do, then he was potentially at risk from Pompey's troops, and unfairly bereft of any protection of his own.

Caesar retained his post as proconsul of Gaul throughout the political ups and downs in Rome. The terminal date suggested by Pompey of 1 March 50 came and went without the outbreak of serious hostilities. On 1 December 50 Caesar offered a compromise solution through the agency of Curio and Antony, who was shortly to take Curio's place as tribune. The proposal was that Caesar would disband his army before he entered Rome to stand for the consulship if Pompey would also disband his troops as a reciprocal gesture. It was somewhat unfair, since Caesar's command was coming to an end, but Pompey could expect to retain his province for much longer. None the less, many senators approved of this plan but the consuls sabotaged it. The consul Marcellus overreacted and asked Pompey to assume command of all the troops in Italy. This was not strictly legal, and Curio vetoed the suggestion. Pompey chose to ignore the tribunician veto.

Just after Antony had taken up office as tribune, on 18 December there was a proposal from the two consuls to declare Caesar a public enemy. There were two legions near Rome which were destined for a campaign in Parthia, and Pompey was urged to take command of them. Antony put a stop to this by means of a virulent speech denouncing Pompey, enumerating all his reprehensible actions such as the way in which he had used force during the trial of Milo. Never mind that Antony had spoken in favour of the trial at the time. A slanging match ensued, with Pompey pointing out that Antony was a bankrupt with debts, and no doubt dragging in all the other charges of drunkenness and bad behaviour. The matter ended there with the

disputes unresolved.

There followed a renewed proposal in January 49 that Caesar should be forced to disband his army by a certain date or be declared an enemy of the state. The tribunes Mark Antony and Quintus Cassius vetoed the proposal, but feelings were running very high and the Senate was not willing to compromise. Antony and Cassius were thrown out of the Senate House. They were warned that their lives were at stake if they tried to re-enter. They left Rome in a hurry, disguised as slaves, and made their way to Caesar together with Curio.

The expulsion of the tribunes from the Senate and the threat of violence raised against them gave Caesar the justification that he needed for his march on Italy. The news that Antony and Cassius had fled from Rome reached him while he was at Ravenna, still just within his own province of Cisalpine Gaul. He had with him the Thirteenth legion and some auxiliaries. He now possessed all the information that he needed to work up the soldiers to fever pitch, explaining how Antony and Cassius, who had tried to protect the interests of Caesar and therefore of the army, had been forcibly ejected from the Senate and hounded out of Rome in fear for their lives. The sacrosanctity of the tribunes had been violated! Caesar relayed to the troops his account of this sacrilege, and elaborated upon the way in which the Senate and Pompey were working against him and against the interests of the army who had fought so hard for Rome for the past ten years. He indicated that Pompey and Cato and their followers were determined to make war on him and his men. They were gathering men and arms and raising cash from the towns and temples of Italy. After this, and more of the same, Caesar's troops were ready to follow him anywhere, and having tested their reactions Caesar marched to Ariminum, sending for the rest of his army from Gaul. This march involved crossing the river Rubicon, which marked the boundary between Cisalpine Gaul, where he was authorised to be, and Italy, where he had no authority and should not have entered, even unaccompanied, without permission from the Senate. To enter Italy at the head of troops was an unequivocal act of war. In his account of the Civil Wars Caesar makes no mention of the Rubicon as such. His Roman audience would know precisely what was involved without being reminded of it in his published works. It is a curious fact that although the Rubicon has assumed great importance in history, nobody can say exactly where it flows.

When Antony, Cassius, and Curio arrived at Caesar's camp at Ariminum, dishevelled and tired, Caesar quickly grasped the opportunity to show them to the troops in their sorry state, to demonstrate just how shabbily they had been treated. Not only that,

but Caesar was now declared a public enemy and by extension of that idea the soldiers too were enemies. Civil war was justified, though negotiations continued to try to avert it.

Antony was immediately sent off on an independent mission to secure Arretium (modern Arezzo) with about 2,000 men under his command while Caesar raised troops elsewhere. When the town was won, and Caesar had assembled his troops, he reunited with Antony at Ancona. On their way southwards they recruited more troops. Meanwhile, 150 kilometres from Rome, at Corfinium, the new governor of Gaul, Domitius Ahenobarbus, tried to stop Caesar, ignoring Pompey's order to retreat and rejoin him. The inhabitants of Corfinium did not want to oppose Caesar and risk death and destruction on behalf of the Pompeians, and after a brief siege they gave up the town. So did the inhabitants of Sulmo, where Antony was sent with five cohorts to eject the Pompeians.

Caesar was apparently unstoppable, with men flocking to him to join his army. One man, however, turned against him. For many years Titus Labienus had been one of Caesar's trusted lieutenants, capable, loyal, and successful in most of his actions. But Labienus came from the same part of the world as Pompey, and now his allegiance changed. He joined the Pompeians and from then onwards he was the most implacable of Caesar's enemies. He may have been jealous of Antony, whose promotion came rapidly, without the long and hard service in the army that Labienus had endured.

Pompey meanwhile had been caught off guard by Caesar's rapid advance from the north. He had done nothing to raise a really effective army, having proclaimed proudly but misguidedly that he only had to stamp his foot and troops would spring up in Italy. Stamp as he would, few troops sprang up, and even if they had, he was not given the time to train them. Having no army of sufficient calibre to match Caesar's, Pompey abandoned Rome and withdrew to the south. He needed to delay the start of the war so that he could train his army. Eventually he set sail from Brundisium and transferred the whole of his army to Greece. Many senators, forced to make a choice, followed him. Caesar was now supreme in Italy, but he was flanked on east and west by armed enemies. Pompey was governor of Spain in absentia and the troops there were loyal, holding the province for him. Caesar acted decisively. He decided to deal with Spain first, summing up the situation with one of his usual succinct statements: 'I am going to fight an army with no commander; then I will deal with the commander with no army.'

Before he left Rome, Caesar had to attend to the government. Many senators had accompanied Pompey to the east, but there were

enough of them left to constitute a meeting of the Senate, summoned by Antony and Cassius as tribunes. With ironic deference to legality, the meeting place was arranged outside the city boundary, the *pomerium*. Military commanders were supposed to lay down their powers before crossing this boundary, and so Caesar, who had crossed the Rubicon and marched on Rome, now hesitated to break the law by entering the city while still commanding his invading army. It showed that he was trying to establish himself within a legal framework, and for the first few days he tried to put through his proposals with senatorial support. Gradually, as he had done during his consulship of 59, he simply went ahead and went to the people's assemblies or used the tribunes to get things done. He required money as a first priority, for a variety of purposes, but chiefly to keep his soldiers loyal. He raided the treasury in the temple of Saturn, pushing aside the tribune who tried to prevent him. So much for his defence of tribunician sacrosanctity. The origins of the treasury related to the time when Rome was sacked by the Gauls in 390 BC. The cash was assembled to pay for the defence of Rome against any further Gallic attacks, so Caesar justified his appropriation of it by reminding the Romans that it was unlikely that there would be any further attacks, since he had now defeated the Gauls.

More cash was raised by the seizure of the estates and lands of the Pompeians, some of whom were dead but most of whom were in the east with Pompey. It would be a brave man who bid for the properties in the sales, since it was not yet certain who would be the victor in the civil war, but some money trickled in. Antony bought two of Pompey's houses, one a country estate and the other in Rome.

The people of Rome were kept docile by a free corn dole and the promise of money payments to each citizen. The Cisalpine Gauls, for long promised Roman citizenship, were enfranchised at last, thus providing Caesar with a population that would for the most part be loyal to him. The provinces were to be governed by Caesar's adherents. Antony's brother Gaius was sent to Illyricum, which would block any march on Italy from the north east

Antony was granted the power of a *propraetor*, which gave him *imperium*, and was left in command of Italy in Caesar's absence. He was in charge of all troops in Italy and by dint of his overall military command he was also in control of the government of Italy, with the exception of the city of Rome, where Marcus Aemilius Lepidus as urban praetor was responsible for day-to-day administration. There were no consuls because they had accompanied Pompey, so Lepidus was supposed to engineer elections to install two new ones, but did not do so.

Antony had little experience in the sphere of government. He was still legally and officially tribune until December 49, but not having held any of the higher offices his knowledge of administration was not as great as his military capabilities. He was quite capable of keeping order, both among the civilian communities and in the army. Energetic and committed, Antony fulfilled his duties with determination and vigour, but without the oppressive and stern attitude that would have ruined his attempts to reconcile opposing factions. He travelled the length and breadth of the country visiting the troops. In a letter to Cicero he revealed that Caesar had ordered him to keep a close watch on the ports to prevent anyone from leaving Italy. There were still several important people who had not yet joined Pompey, so it was important for Caesar to retain the moral upper hand, and it was especially important to dissuade people from taking money and materials to Pompey. Antony's education had equipped him for persuasive letter writing; he tried quite eloquently to win Cicero over to the Caesarian cause by alternately cajoling and then by making veiled threats about what might happen if he decided to join the Pompeians. In the end Cicero did leave Italy, but his initial vacillation probably did not impress Pompey very much.

Much later, after Caesar's assassination, Cicero tried to blacken Antony's name in connection with his command of Italy during Caesar's absence in Spain. He laid great emphasis on the fact that Antony had ignored the needs of the civilians in the Italian towns while he attended to the troops, and had scandalized the aristocracy of the municipalities by appearing at official receptions in the company of his mistress – an actress no less, and therefore not an asset to the representative of the Roman state. It is significant that even at his most vitriolic Cicero could find nothing more serious with which to charge Antony as Caesar's deputy. If there had been death and destruction, pillage and looting, or the slightest misdemeanour to report, Cicero would not have wasted his time thinking up fulsome phrases to describe loose morals and actresses. Antony's conduct in Italy may not have been exemplary in so far as his drinking and womanising were concerned, but he would understand the importance of winning over the population of the Italian municipalities, not least because they provided the main recruiting grounds for soldiers and political supporters. The town of Bologna, for instance, provided many of Antony's own political supporters or clients. As he toured Italy, Antony would be constantly aware that he represented not just Rome, but Caesar himself, and he was too level headed to fail to understand that to offend Caesar would ruin his career. Without Caesar, and Caesar's money and Caesar's support, he would be alone; he would have no hope whatsoever of furthering his political progress by

changing his allegiance, since he was by now too much involved with Caesar to make a credible convert to the other side, and in this case there were definitely only two sides from which to choose. Cicero's accusation that Antony shirked his duties at this time cannot be substantiated; it would have been foolish in the extreme to have neglected any groups of people in Italy who could have formed a large clientship for Caesar, or for Antony himself.

As well as successes for Antony there were also losses. His friend Curio had been sent to Sicily, and from there he had crossed to Africa with two legions to fight the Pompeians who had allied with Juba, king of Numidia. The expedition was a complete disaster and Curio was killed. Fulvia was therefore a widow for the second time. In the east, Antony's brother, Gaius, governor of Illyricum, was captured by the Pompeians, and remained a prisoner until after the final battle at Pharsalus. His troops were recruited into Pompey's army.

Nearer home, Caesar had to deal with a mutiny among his own army. The soldiers had fought in Spain and on the way home they had taken Massilia, which had stood against Caesar. They had made some profit from this exercise, but now they were tired and had little to show for all their efforts. Caesar singled out the Ninth legion and threatened to decimate it, which entailed lining up the soldiers and killing every tenth man. He then made it clear that he would discharge all the rest of the troops; because of course if they were exhausted then they were unfit for service. He addressed them as citizens, not soldiers, as though dismissal were an accomplished fact. In calling their bluff Caesar rapidly brought them to their senses. Very soon they were clamouring to fight wherever he sent them. Caesar tidied up by arresting a few ringleaders and executing them.

Politically Caesar was now supreme. Lepidus as urban praetor proposed that Caesar should be made Dictator, an office that was normally called into being in emergencies and held for a temporary period, usually six months. In this instance Caesar's tenure of the post was even shorter than the normal period, since he laid down the Dictatorship and left Rome after only eleven days in the city, having first secured his election as consul for 48, with Servilius Isauricus as colleague. By the time he entered upon his consulship, he was on his way to Greece. There was little time to lose, since Pompey had been recruiting and training his army for a year. The trial of strength was about to begin.

FROM PHARSALUS TO THE IDES OF MARCH, 48–44 BC

Caesar's greatest problem was his lack of ships. He set sail with seven legions and the cavalry, leaving five legions to be ferried and across the Adriatic, with Antony in charge of the proceedings. Caesar planned to send his transports back for the rest of his army but some of them were destroyed. Bibulus, his erstwhile and embittered consular colleague, was in command of the Pompeian fleet, and enjoyed a moment of triumph when he managed to cut Caesar off from the rest of his army. But Caesar was as resourceful as ever. He landed near Palaeste, and soon won over Oricum and Apollonia, where he made camp. He sent messages to Antony to embark the five legions as soon as possible and sail to Oricum, and while in his perilous position, with only half his army holding onto a narrow strip of territory, he sent envoys to Pompey with proposals of peace but was rebuffed. When Antony did not appear, he tried to set sail in an open boat to cross the Adriatic and hurry the troops along, but the weather and tides conspired against him, forcing him back to land. This story as told by Caesar himself puts a rather more heroic interpretation on the event; he encouraged the captain of the ship with the famous phrase 'Have no fear; you carry Caesar and his fortune.' This time, however, Fortune failed him, and he had to rely on Antony's ingenuity instead.

Antony was experiencing frustrating delays, blockaded in Brundisium by squadrons of the Pompeian fleet under the command of Scribonius Libo, who occupied the island of Santa Andraea as a base. This was a very strong position for the fleet, but the one commodity that the Pompeians lacked was fresh water. Antony accordingly guarded all the landing places where the Pompeians might come in for water, and waited. Libo was eventually forced to withdraw, and Antony seized his chance. He tried to make for Apollonia, but the wind was in the wrong direction, and forced him towards Nymphaeum, north of Dyrrachium. He made a good landing, skilfully avoiding the Pompeian fleet, and while he was hurriedly disembarking his troops the wind changed, blowing the enemy ships onto the shore, where they lost several vessels. Antony lost no time in setting off southwards to join Caesar, while at the same time Pompey marched north to intercept him. The potential trap did not work; either

Caesarian troops reached Antony to warn him, or he sent out reliable scouts who discovered the Pompeian army. Forethought and knowledge of the enemy plans saved Antony from ambush. It was now Pompey himself who had to give up the pursuit and make his escape, since he was between two armies, having lost the opportunity of eliminating one of them. A heroic stand was out of the question. Pompey withdrew to fight elsewhere.

If Caesar had harboured any doubts about Antony, they ought to have been dispelled after these episodes, which demonstrated that, in Antony, Caesar had a capable and reliable lieutenant, who would do as he was asked to the best of his ability, and who displayed courage and considerable intelligence in carrying out his orders. Antony had used guile, patience, and his knowledge of geography to outwit Libo instead of tackling him head on, inviting a battle, and probably losing ships and men in the process. He had embarked as soon as Libo moved off, and after landing at Nymphaeum he had managed to avoid walking straight into Pompey's ambush. Mark Antony, for all his love of wine, women, and song and his dissolute behaviour, had a level head and knew when to remain patiently inactive as well as when to burst into action.

Reunited with Antony, Caesar marched off. As soon as Pompey realised where he was heading, he followed in hot pursuit, so the two armies raced for Dyrrachium. Caesar reached the destination first, but Pompey seized the high ground of Petra. Caesar dug in around the enemy camp, blockading it on three sides with siege works reaching to the sea on the western side. The campaign now hinged on supplies. Pompey was surrounded, but his fleet was dominant at sea and his troops could be supplied from the coast; Caesar, on the other hand, was free to come and go, but his troops steadily ate their way through the available food and had to go further and further away to find supplies. The situation was compounded by the fact that the Pompeian army had already stripped the immediate territory of most of its available food before Caesar arrived from his war in Spain.

Pompey wisely avoided committing himself to a pitched battle, launching occasional attacks on Caesar's defences instead. All that Caesar had to do was simply to wait. Time would tip the balance, for two reasons. First, in the fertile plains at Caesar's back, the crops would eventually grow again, enabling him to feed both men and horses. Secondly, though Pompey could feed his troops on seaborne supplies, he had no fodder for his horses, so it would eventually be Pompey, not Caesar, who found himself in serious difficulties. It was in Caesar's interests to endeavour to survive the starvation of the first months. Before the waiting game bore fruit, Pompey tried to break

out. A plan to lure Caesar into a trap was foiled by hard fighting. Next, Pompey attacked the weakest part of Caesar's lines, at the south end where the lines joined the sea. At this point, Caesar had constructed two lines of defences, one facing inwards to complete the siege works, and one facing outwards, in case Pompey should ferry troops by sea to outflank the siege lines and mount an attack from behind. Two Gallic chieftains, deserting from Caesar for reasons unknown, informed Pompey that Caesar's lines of circumvallation simply extended down to the sea, and had not yet been closed off with a trench and palisade joining the two parallel defences together. It was possible, therefore, to penetrate between the two lines from the coast. There was an added advantage in that Caesar's main camp was at the extreme northern end of the siege works, while the southern tip was guarded by the quaestor Lentulus Marcellinus, who was ill.

Pompey's attack began in the middle of the night. He ferried sixty cohorts to the point of attack, complete with ladders and light artillery. He had ordered the men to put wicker shields on their helmets to protect them from missiles thrown by the Caesarian troops. The attack from the sea was coordinated with another from within the Pompeian camp, so the Caesarians found themselves in a desperate position, with the enemy to the front and rear, and also between the two lines. The Caesarians broke and ran. Marcellinus' cohorts were unable to reverse the position, but Antony came up from the outposts with twelve cohorts and managed to stabilize the lines.

This was no mean feat. If Caesar did not exaggerate wildly, then Antony was outnumbered four to one, and he had to restore the confidence of men who were badly frightened and had given up. But he did it, somehow. By now he would be a well-known figure, with a reputation for courage and ingenuity. Men would trust him to be able to do something in adverse situations like this. Had they not done so, or had no faith in him, they would have carried on running away. Eventually Caesar himself arrived, hurrying down from the northern sector, and the Pompeians were beaten off.

Pompey's next move was to camp close to the siege works, a short distance from the sea, where he could provision his troops and also provide much-needed fodder for his horses. Caesar tried to storm the new camp in a surprise attack, but failed and once again the Caesarians were routed. If Pompey had followed up this victory immediately it is doubtful if Caesar would have survived. Even though there was no vigorous pursuit, Caesar decided to raise the siege. He did so in progressive stages. First the baggage was moved out; then most of the army left, except for two legions. Caesar intended to keep Pompey guessing until he could get most of the army away; at the last

moment, Caesar departed for Apollonia, where he lodged the wounded men. Pompey followed, but not quite as rapidly as Caesar moved. After it became clear that this was a definite withdrawal and not a short promenade, Pompey was further delayed because his troops had not brought all their baggage with them, and went back to the camp at Dyrrachium for their belongings.

The two armies came to a halt near Pharsalus, where they both made camp. Each day Caesar drew up his army in battle order, but could not tempt Pompey to risk a general engagement. He decided to march. On the very day appointed for breaking camp, Pompey deployed his whole army, ready for battle. Caesar rapidly formed new plans, abandoning the withdrawal and drawing up his army in response to the Pompeians. Antony commanded the left wing, with two legions, the Eighth and the Ninth, but these legions were depleted by their losses at Dyrrachium, and their actual strength only amounted to one legion.

The decisive action of the battle of Pharsalus was on Caesar's right, where he had shrewdly placed eight cohorts of his normal reserve. He brought them into the battle just at the right moment, as the Pompeian cavalry drove the Caesarian horsemen back, exposing the whole of the right wing to attack. The reserve stood their ground with their spears stuck into the earth to form a bristling defensive line. Gradually the tables were turned, and it was the Pompeian left flank which was exposed to attack; but Pompey's troops did not hold their positions. Caesar had ordered his men to strike for the faces of the Pompeian troops, and the disconcerting and unexpected manoeuvre unnerved the enemy.

Long before the battle was over Pompey left the field because he knew that all was lost. He rode back to camp, leaving it in unseemly haste, disguised as a trader or a slave, just as the Caesarians were breaking in. Antony was given the task of pursuing the fleeing Pompeian army, which he did with relentless efficiency. It was an important task and contributed to the completeness of the victory; too many stragglers left to their own devices could reunite and become a dangerous element, fighting on in the name of Pompey, or Rome, or the Republic. Caesar needed to eradicate or capture as many as he could; but in the end remnants of Pompey's army did escape, and established themselves in Africa and Spain.

Pompey evaded capture, going on to collect his wife and son, aiming eventually for Egypt where he hoped that he could rely upon his previous connections with Ptolemy Auletes, to borrow money and recruit another army, and continue the war. The theory was sound and Caesar could not let it happen, and followed as quickly as he

could. He was not to know at this point that Pompey would meet death at the hands of the Egyptian courtiers. Before he left Greece to chase after Pompey wherever he went Caesar required someone with authority to look after affairs in Rome and Italy; for this task he chose Antony.

Caesar arrived in Egypt too late for an audience with Pompey, because the advisers who surrounded the young Ptolemy, successor of Auletes, had persuaded him that 'Dead men don't talk' and had murdered Pompey before he had set foot on shore. Whatever hopes Caesar may have entertained of bringing the civil war to a peaceful conclusion were ended. Pompey was now a martyr and could not influence his followers to lay down their arms. There was also a civil war going on in Egypt, since according to the terms of Ptolemy Auletes' will Cleopatra and the young Ptolemy were supposed to share the throne, but at some time before Caesar arrived in Alexandria Cleopatra had been defeated and driven out. Her legendary return to Alexandria, wrapped in a carpet carried by her servant, probably changed the course of history. Caesar played his part in the Egyptian war, besieged for a while in the palace, and once nearly losing his life by drowning when he tried and failed to gain possession of the causeway connecting the mainland to Pharos Island. When peace was forcibly restored, he declared in favour of Cleopatra as ruler of Egypt. His association with her extended to more than just politics. He left Egypt in summer 47 to fight a brief war with Pharnaces, king of Bosphorus, the occasion of his laconic announcement of victory: *veni, vidi, vici* (I came, I saw, I conquered). By the time he had returned to Rome, in October 47, Cleopatra had probably given birth to their son, called Caesarion, or Little Caesar.

The situation in Rome had reached a critical point. Keeping order in the city had not been an easy task for Antony. It was a time of great uncertainty, when people were unsure of the future in general and their place in the scheme of things in particular. Opportunists and men with grievances stirred up troubles for their own benefit. The first to do so was Marcus Caelius Rufus, whose main cause for unhappiness was that as praetor and a supporter of Caesar he had not been promoted to the more important post of urban praetor, so he bore a grudge which found its expression in his making common cause with the many debtors of Rome. The consul Servilius removed him from Rome, but then he joined forces with Milo in Campania. The latter had returned illegally from exile in Marseilles. The two rebels eventually met their ends separately in different parts of Italy, but it was a precedent for worse things to come in the city itself, where unrest was fomenting.

It was unfortunate that Antony began well but finished badly in governing Rome and Italy. He persuaded the people to make Caesar Dictator for the whole of the year 47, overriding the general rule that a Dictator should only be appointed for six months. Antony decided that he should be the deputy of the Dictator, traditionally the *magister equitum* or master of horse. Strictly, the appointment should have been made by the Dictator Caesar, but objections to his appointment faded away, largely because the twelve-month Dictatorship for Caesar was already such an irregularity.

If Antony had been more circumspect in his behaviour he could perhaps have avoided some of the opprobrium that he earned, but he overdid his demonstration of power. There were no consuls or praetors for 47 because it had been agreed that Caesar had the right to preside over the elections of the magistrates, and he was not in Rome to do so. Thus there were no real checks on Antony's actions. He was needlessly theatrical in presenting himself in his military role to the Senate and the people, defying convention and scandalising everyone by wearing the costume of a general, especially the purple cloak; and he wore his armour and sword even when calling the Senate together, which upset even more people. He added insult to injury by going about with a military bodyguard and six lictors to precede him wherever he went. If he had resorted to a toga and a stately appearance, moderated his speech and attitudes, and kept his very real powers veiled, he may have fared better after Caesar's return to Rome.

His private life was just as reprehensible. He took over Pompey's house in Rome and spared no expense in indulging himself and his friends, but seemingly he had not actually paid for any of the Pompeian properties that he had acquired. Cicero accused him of going through the contents of Pompey's house, especially the wine stores, in a matter of days. Antony's roisterous reputation is probably not simply a product of retrospective vituperation from Cicero's *Philippics*. Mark Antony always knew how to enjoy life to the full. No one could ever accuse him of either abstemiousness or discretion. He had a generous nature, and was careless of the consequences of his actions in private life. He lived as he wished to live, and was not scrupulous about his choice of associates – in this he was very different from Caesar, who knew how to be liberal and magnanimous, but at the same time quite decidedly kept his distance from potentially detrimental colleagues. Antony could have learned this much from Caesar, and even more from his rival and eventual enemy, Caesar's great nephew Octavius, who knew that there was no dividing line between public and private life, and who played the part of statesman

at all times, even with his closest friends.

The rift between Antony and the Senate was already crystallising, and it solidified when trouble broke out in earnest, stirred up by Publius Cornelius Dolabella. This individual had married Tullia, Cicero's daughter, and it was said that he had an affair with Antony's wife Antonia. Presumably for reasons of self-promotion, Dolabella made common cause with the many debtors in Rome. Debt problems provided a constant rallying cry for troublemakers in Rome. Whipped up to desperate fury by Dolabella, the Roman mob occupied the Forum, clamouring for the cancellation of debts. The Senate in alarm authorised Antony to restore order. Wisely, Antony had waited until he was asked to intervene, most likely so that if he was castigated for his actions he could fall back on senatorial decree instead of his own initiative as the prime motive. If that was the reason for his delay, it did him no good. He brought his troops to the Forum and surrounded the crowd, possibly hoping that the very presence of soldiers would bring the rioters to their senses. But serious problems arose when the skirmishing escalated into battle.

It is not totally fair to blame the subsequent mayhem on Antony. He had started, so he had to finish, and once he realised that he would not be able to clear the Forum without a bloody struggle he could not back down; and if he was going to do it at all he could not use half measures. In the end about 800 men were killed. Some men were rounded up and executed by being thrown from the Tarpeian Rock.

Naturally the Senate reacted with shocked disapproval and would not support Antony's actions. It was even speculated that Antony had been driven on by jealousy and personal rivalry with Dolabella, because the latter had seduced Antonia, whom Antony divorced at about this time. These are the bare facts, but it is not certain that jealous rage was the sole source of the slaughter in the Forum – it is more likely that there was a great deal of speculation and bending of the facts to fit the theory. The supposition that Antony allowed himself to be ruled by his emotions is not substantiated. He was consistently efficient in a crisis, and perhaps in this case he was simply too efficient.

It was an unfortunate circumstance, and the result was that when Caesar returned home Antony found himself in disgrace. Caesar could not afford to condone his heavy-handed way of restoring order, even if that had not been Antony's original intention; so for political reasons Caesar dropped him for a while. Antony received no offices or posts for 46. Aemilius Lepidus was made consul as Caesar's colleague, and when he left for Africa to pursue the war against the Pompeians Caesar did not take Antony with him, choosing Dolabella instead. This

must have been hard for Antony to contemplate, since it was Dolabella who had caused all the trouble in the first place; but he was rewarded with a post in Caesar's entourage and taken on campaign, while Antony, who had at least put a stop to the riots, languished in Rome, without official appointment, and blatantly out of favour. Most galling of all, Caesar decreed that Antony had to be seen to pay for Pompey's house, however much he may have contributed to the defeat of the original owner. Pompey was Caesar's enemy, but he had been a great man, the foremost Roman of his day, and it simply would not be fitting to allow the erstwhile *magister equitum* to take over his belongings in the city. Spoils of war were all very well on the battlefield, but there must be some higher standard of behaviour in Rome.

While Caesar was absent fighting the African war that was ended by the victory of Thapsus on 6 April 46, Antony was unemployed. He remained so throughout the year, even in September when Caesar celebrated his famous triumphs, four in a row, over Gaul, Egypt, Pharnaces of Pontus, and lastly Juba of Mauretania. The final triumph was really over Romans, but Juba had joined the Pompeians and had lost his life in the conflict, thereby providing the excuse for a triumph over a foreign enemy to mask a successful conclusion to a civil war. The small son of the king of Mauretania, also called Juba, was paraded through the streets, but then spared the execution that usually followed such a spectacle. He was brought up and educated in Rome, and eventually restored to the throne of Mauretania by Augustus, who married him off to Cleopatra Selene, the daughter of Antony and Cleopatra. The same clemency was extended to Arsinoe, the sister of Cleopatra, and Caesar's enemy in the Alexandrian war. After displaying her to the Roman people in his triumph over Egypt, Caesar sent her to Ephesus, but she did not long survive there. In 41, on the orders of Antony and Cleopatra, she was put to death.

During the last years of the civil wars against the sons and followers of Pompey, fought in Africa and Spain, Cleopatra was in Rome as the guest of Caesar. She was lodged, notoriously, in his villa across the Tiber. She and Antony must have met at least on a few occasions, but no tradition has survived of their association during these years. Antony may have noticed her, but since she was clearly attached to Caesar, either emotionally or perhaps merely politically, he may have prudently stood back from what was ostensibly denied to him. He was free to seduce the rest of Rome, and perhaps warily avoided becoming too closely involved with anything in Caesar's province. On the other hand, he may have been too distracted to notice Cleopatra at all. He remarried at some unknown date, this time

choosing the widow of Clodius and of Curio, the lady of fearsome reputation known as Fulvia. He was devoted to her, as all surviving sources attest, even the hostile ones. Antony's enemies used his indulgent affection for Fulvia as evidence of his undignified and extremely un-Roman behaviour. Fulvia was an intelligent and forceful woman, whose activities were decidedly not confined to spinning, weaving, and keeping the keys to the larder. She was ambitious, but being a woman she was forced to achieve her ambitions through and on behalf of her various husbands, the first of whom were disreputable friends of Antony who did not rise very far in the senatorial hierarchy. Married to Antony, Fulvia found a new lease of life and an outlet for her restless ambitions, which of necessity included meddling in politics and military affairs. The fact that she was not brought to heel was construed as a dreadful fault and laid firmly at Antony's door. It was said that it was Fulvia who tamed him and accustomed him to obey the orders of a woman. All of this was dreamed up and appropriately applied after he and Cleopatra had begun to represent a serious threat to Octavian, who persuaded the Senate and people that the Egyptian Queen was also a serious threat to Rome itself.

Caesar worked rapidly in Rome, pushing through reforms which he considered necessary, without the attendant freedom of debate that was customary in the Senate. He was made Dictator for the third time, this time for ten years, with specific responsibility for reforming the Republic. One of his most far-reaching reforms was the reorganisation of the calendar, for which task he employed an astronomer from Egypt called Sosigenes, whose calculations were based on a solar year of 365 days, with an extra day to be inserted every fourth year. It was a vast improvement on the old Roman lunar year which required constant adjustment. During the wars, these adjustments had been neglected, with the result that the seasons no longer matched the months to which they were supposed to belong. In order to bring the seasons into line Caesar inserted several more days into the calendar during November. There was little time to attend to the many political affairs that demanded reform, since the sons of Pompeius and Labienus had established themselves in Spain and could not be allowed to gain more armed strength or political sympathy.

Antony, still *persona non grata* with Caesar, was not given a post with the army that went to Spain. Lepidus was made *magister equitum*, and Caesar's great nephew Octavius, too ill to accompany the main entourage, followed on his own initiative with a few of his friends, arriving too late for the decisive battle of Munda on 17 March 45, but none the less risking death and destruction on the way. It required

ingenuity and courage to travel to a war zone without an army. His actions impressed Caesar, and may have been influential in persuading the Dictator to include Octavius in his will, which he wrote at one of his villas outside Rome before entering the city in yet another triumph. It is said that these details concerning Octavius were added in an appendix to the will, and may not therefore have been part of the original text. The whole problem of Caesar's will is much disputed, but until this time Octavius had not had very much opportunity to demonstrate to his great uncle that he possessed intelligence and staying power. He went everywhere with Caesar while he journeyed through Spain, settling boundaries, adjudicating between various peoples, and receiving embassies. One of these embassies, from Saguntum, came to Octavius himself, believing that he could influence Caesar and bring about a favourable result for the Saguntines, which of course he did, to the great delight of the early biographers of Augustus. Octavius was a discreet youth, shrewd and level headed, who knew when to talk and when to remain silent. There could be no greater antithesis to Antony – full of life, indiscreet, probably noisy when he should have been quiet, silent when he should have been saying something. The normally taciturn youth Octavius travelled in Caesar's carriage on the way back from Spain and the two would have ample opportunity to converse and to get to know each other.

On Caesar's return from the wars, travelling overland via Gaul and the north of Italy, Antony set off to meet him; but when he reached Narbonne he heard a rumour that Caesar was dead, so he hurried back to Rome. This is the context of the practical joke that he played on Fulvia when he arrived home. He entered the house in disguise, pretending to be his own messenger with a letter from Antony to his wife, declaring his undying love for her. While she read the letter, the false messenger lingered to witness her reaction, which was entirely satisfactory: tearful and quite romantic, belying the usual descriptions of Fulvia as a virago with no redeeming features. At this point Antony threw off his disguise, embraced his wife, and presumably lived happily ever after. Plutarch included the anecdote in his biography in order to illustrate Antony's character. One may be permitted to ask what Antony would have done if Fulvia had tossed the letter aside with disdain, but it is not likely that he would have made a mistake of that sort. In general he was an excellent judge of character; his fault was not in evaluation but in detaching himself from unsuitable associates.

The rumour that Caesar was dead was of course unfounded, so Antony set off again with Gaius Trebonius to meet his erstwhile chief.

This time he was forgiven for his past transgressions; he travelled back through Italy in Caesar's own carriage, relegating Octavius to a second carriage. No one could be in any doubt that Antony was back in favour. He was promised the consulship with Caesar as colleague for 44. He was thirty-nine years old and his political career, hitherto sporadically advanced and delayed, was just about to start. He could not possibly have envisaged exactly how. He probably dreamed of army commands under Caesar, a second consulship, a proconsular command of his own, perhaps even eventually stepping into Caesar's shoes as virtual head of state. He probably thought it would take a few years and some hard work. He could not have predicted at this point in his life that in less than six months a cataclysmic series of events would cut short his apprenticeship and propel him to the summit in just two days.

In Rome Caesar took up the reins of government again. The tribune Lucius Antonius, Antony's brother, arranged a plebiscite in 44 to empower Caesar to nominate the consuls for the following years. Aulus Hirtius and Vibius Pansa were to be consuls for 43, and Decimus Brutus and Lucius Munatius Plancus were nominated for 42. These two were to be governors of Gaul before they took up their consular office: Decimus Brutus in the Cisalpine province and Plancus in Transalpine Gaul. The other western provinces were also to be handed to Caesarian adherents; Lepidus was to give up office as *magister equitum* and instead to become governor of Nearer Spain and southern Gaul and Asinius Pollio was to take over command of Further Spain. One man did not receive what he thought his due reward: Gaius Cassius Longinus had been quaestor with the army of Crassus in Parthia and had done much to re-establish the Roman position in the east after the great disaster of 53. He could normally have expected some important office to mark his political progress, but he was given only a praetorship for 44. He thought he was worth more, and he began to think that all promotion was blocked by Caesar. Such men are dangerous.

Antony did not always bend spinelessly to Caesar's will. As Dictator, Caesar perhaps considered his consulship – it was his fifth – somewhat superfluous, so he resigned it after a short time, intending that Dolabella should become consul in his place. It would give him the necessary administrative experience and relieve Caesar of some mundane business. Antony objected to Dolabella at all times, so he attacked him in a speech in the Senate, precipitating an acrimonious debate. Caesar walked out in disgust. Antony then fell back on his priestly office as augur, declaring the signs unfavourable. This meant that Dolabella could not legally be appointed consul. Finally Antony

got his own way, and succeeded in preventing Dolabella from becoming consul. Caesar seemingly did not bear any grudge against Antony; but Dolabella did.

Grudges were building up against Caesar as the year progressed. Perhaps he knew, but ignored them, since in reality only a fraction of the Senate and people had any serious quarrel with him, and their quarrel was in the main a personal one, however much they dressed it up as a fight for political liberty. It has been pointed out, cynically but accurately, that to the senators liberty meant the freedom to dominate and exploit the lower classes in Rome and the peoples of the provinces. The Roman system of government had to change to accommodate the development of the Empire. Caesar could see only too clearly what was needed, but he was no longer young and felt that he must hurry. It was his lack of time and consequently his lack of patience that led to his downfall. It was not the changes that caused all the trouble, for many of his measures were helpful and based on common sense; rather it was the high-handed way in which he went about making these changes. It seemed to more and more people that he had no feeling for the old Roman customs, riding roughshod over them, and sometimes even mocking them. He said that the Republic was just a name, which was eminently true, but anathema to the ears of the patriotically proud Romans who saw no further than the city and subservient peoples around it. He also said that Sulla must have been an idiot to lay down his Dictatorship, which went deep into the consciousness of those who had perhaps hoped that the domination of Caesar would eventually come to an end and had consequently been prepared to sit it out and wait.

Honours accumulated, granted to him by a Senate that increasingly owed its own status to his power. He had increased the number of senators and filled the House with his own adherents, not all of them of traditional senatorial backgrounds, some of them not even thoroughbred Romans. He had already enfranchised the Cisalpine Gauls, and in an effort to broaden the base of the expanding Roman Empire he extended citizenship to more groups of people who could bring a vital contribution to the Roman world. He created senators from Romans and newly enfranchised citizens to fill the ranks of the Senate depleted by the civil war, although he rather overdid it, ending up with a much enlarged Senate which Augustus reduced. The dilution of Roman stock was keenly felt, but what was worse was the knowledge that in his deliberate policy of clemency Caesar held all Rome in his power. He even had a shrine set up to his *Clementia*; he was declared divine himself and Antony was appointed as priest of his cult. Much controversy and debate has been worked out on paper as

to the precise meaning of this. Some scholars argue that this divinity was one of the most offensive aspects of Caesar's domination; others more reasonably suggest that the Roman mentality could accommodate divine heroes once they were dead, and that it was never the intention to make Caesar a living god on earth. According to this theory, Caesar was a kind of god in waiting, to be included in the Roman panoply once he had died. It makes sense, in that Antony took up his office as priest of Caesar's cult only many years later, long after Caesar's death, when Antony and Octavian divided the world between themselves.

If there had been anybody left in Rome who thought that once Caesar had achieved all his aims he would then lay down his powers, as Sulla had done, these men must have been very disappointed when the Dictator accepted the office for life on 14 February 44. The fuss about whether he intended to make himself king ought to have receded in importance after this, but it was still a constant theme, which Caesar perhaps decided to bring to a close next day at the festival of the Lupercalia. This was a very ancient and hallowed fertility ritual that dated far back to Rome's past. Antony's part in this particular festival in February 44 was politically motivated, but to what specific purpose is not known. The motives of the various participants have been debated ever since the event, with no unequivocal result.

When the festival began, several young men, including Antony as priest, ran the circuit of Rome in the traditional manner, clothed in only a loincloth, carrying goatskin thongs with which they lightly touched people. It was a fertility ritual with origins shrouded in the mysterious past. The goatskin thongs were alleged to have magical properties that ensured an easy birth for pregnant women, or would help women who wished to become pregnant.

Caesar watched the proceedings, dressed in triumphal clothes, and seated on a golden chair. Antony approached the chair, carrying a laurel wreath wrapped round a diadem, which he offered to Caesar. The crowd roared approval when Caesar refused it. Antony offered the crown again, Caesar refused it more emphatically, and the crowd roared further approval. There are several possible interpretations of this story. Antony may have instigated the whole escapade on his own initiative, either in the hope that Caesar would accept and become king, or in the hope that Caesar would refuse and thereby convince the people and the Senate that he definitely did not want to be king. On the other hand, Caesar may have collaborated with Antony in an effort to put an end to all speculation that he wanted to be king. Plutarch suggests that the whole episode was an experiment to test the

reactions of the crowd. This implies the tacit assumption that if the crowd had urged him to accept the diadem Caesar would have made himself king.

Whatever the purpose of Antony's diadem and wreath, the Lupercalia incident simply made matters worse and increased speculation and suspicion, even though Caesar dedicated the crown to Jupiter in the great temple on the Capitol. He also ordered the scribes to record the fact that he had refused the kingship to be entered in the *Fasti*, the official journal of the state.

Such fastidiousness did not save him. Within a month, the Liberators of the Republic had struck down the man they called tyrant at a meeting of the Senate on 15 March, more famously known as the Ides of March. The meeting was to be held in Pompey's Theatre, not the Senate House in the Forum, because it had been burned down as part of the funeral of Clodius in 52. It was customary to hold meetings at venues other than the Senate House, so Caesar need not have any foreboding about this particular meeting or venue. The famous story of the soothsayer is probably known to everyone. 'Beware the Ides of March' is a familiar catchphrase; but of course Caesar spurned the advice. His wife Calpurnia is said to have tried to prevent him from attending the Senate because of a bad dream she had had the night before, but Caesar was never one to take heed of warnings when there was something that he wanted to do. Decimus Brutus came to his house to share his carriage to Pompey's Theatre, perhaps to allay any suspicions, and of course to make sure that Caesar did actually attend the Senate that day. It would have been embarrassing and somewhat distressing for the Liberators if their victim did not appear. They would then have been forced to sit through the session with daggers hidden in their clothes, and then go quietly home and start all over again.

When they reached their destination, Decimus and Caesar may have waited for Antony to arrive, or perhaps he was already there, waiting for Caesar. No one really knows. Antony had to be dealt with, of course, so that he could not assist Caesar, and because it was not part of the plot to kill him. It is said that Brutus, idealist that he was, argued against the murder of Antony, and Shakespeare incorporates the sentiment in his play, making Cassius the one who does not trust Antony. Taking heed of Brutus, the Liberators had designated one or perhaps two of their number to prevent Antony from entering the meeting in Caesar's wake. Therefore Decimus Brutus, and perhaps also Gaius Trebonius, distracted Antony for a moment, while Caesar went ahead into the building.

The sources are confused as to who did what, but from Antony's

point of view outside the meeting house so far everything was normal. He would be drawn aside for a few meaningless words. He may have noticed a distracted nervousness on the part of the men who were addressing him. Then the commotion would be heard from the audience chamber of Pompey's Theatre, followed by crowds of senators fleeing for their lives, probably shouting about murder or perhaps not shouting at all, grimly intent on finding their attendants and going home. By this time it is highly likely that Decimus Brutus and Trebonius would have prudently left Antony, so he probably had to find out for himself what had gone on. It is not known whether he went inside and found Caesar's body. The sources state that he fled, disguised as a slave, presumably hastily borrowing clothes from one of his attendants. He found refuge in a friend's house. Sometime later he went home and barricaded his house, prepared for a siege. Caesar was dead. Antony was his closest associate, and also consul, the chief magistrate who only very recently had offered Caesar the crown. It did not matter now whether it was all a ruse, or whether it had been in deadly earnest. The incontrovertible fact was that Antony, of all the men in Rome, could never dissociate himself from Caesar, and therefore he might have been next on the list for assassination. After a while he would begin to reason, send out spies to gather information, strengthen his position, and consider what to do. He had not been dragged into the Theatre and struck down with Caesar. He had been deliberately drawn aside, but not trapped in a corner to be killed after Caesar was dead. In fact he had been allowed to get away. That probably meant that he had not been a primary target for the assassins, whoever they were, and the fact that no one was battering his door down some hours after the deadly deed perhaps meant that even in the aftermath of the assassination he had not been added to the list of victims, if indeed there was such a list.

Information was the most urgent need. Gradually Antony would ascertain that the Liberators were a small number of men headed by Brutus and Cassius, that they had tried to address the crowds in the name of Liberty, but had been driven off and had established themselves on the Capitol Hill, in some confusion that they had not been received with rapturous applause for their act of liberation. They had no military force to speak of, while Lepidus on the Tiber Island had command of several troops. He sent a message that he was prepared to use them as Antony wished. Antony began to rally. He brought legionaries to the Campus Martius and Lepidus blockaded the Capitol.

It is said that only sixty men were party to the plot, which is a very small proportion of the inflated Senate of 900 men that Caesar

had created. The Liberators had lofty ideals but not even the lowliest of plans, save that of killing Caesar. Upright and high minded to the last, they eschewed the use of force because that would have been the ultimate paradox: to remove a Dictator they hated and then to replace him with an even more despotic narrow-minded rule. Consequently they made no arrangements for the government of Rome or the provinces, imagining that with the tyrant dead everything would automatically revert to the ideal Republic of old, without a hint of military backing or persuasion of some other kind to encourage law and order. The reaction of the people demonstrated to them the extent to which they were out of touch with reality. Not many Romans had felt the need for Liberty in the idealistic sense that Brutus and Cassius imagined. Caesar had done much to ease the lot of the common people, and the soldiers had little quarrel with him. Only the senators had felt themselves oppressed; but without definite plans for their future they had now delivered themselves to Antony.

Always brilliant, clear headed, and rational in a crisis, Antony acted quickly once he knew the facts. As consul he convened the Senate for 17 March in the temple of Tellus, which just happened to be near his house and not too far removed from his troops.

AFTER CAESAR, 44–43 BC

Before the Senate met on 17 March Antony thoroughly reinforced his position. Control of the Caesarian faction was supremely important, as well as control of the Caesarian troops. He began to find out which members of the Senate and people were his friends and which were real or potential enemies. Lepidus turned out to be an ally. He made contact immediately after Caesar's assassination to offer his support, which must have been a relief to Antony since Lepidus as *magister equitum* commanded troops stationed on the Tiber Island and could just as easily have used them to oppose Antony. They cooperated in restoring order in the city. Lepidus was rewarded with the office of Pontifex Maximus, vacant now that Caesar was dead. Antony pulled strings and bypassed the procedure that should have attended Lepidus' appointment. In order to cement his alliance with Lepidus, Antony betrothed his daughter, Antonia, to Lepidus' son, though in the end she did not marry the younger Lepidus.

It remained to sound out men like Oppius and Balbus, Caesar's freedmen secretaries and financiers, and many other Caesarian politicians, military men, and equestrian business magnates. Rome was no doubt full of clandestine activity into the small hours of 15 March and during the following day, as slaves and messengers dashed from house to house, putting Antony in touch with as many of Caesar's partisans as possible.

One of the most vital priorities was to gather all Caesar's papers, which Antony immediately obtained from the great man's widow Calpurnia, without any need for persuasion. He probably visited her as soon as he could on the night of 15 March, or sent a messenger to obtain what he wanted. To wait until next day may have been unwise. Along with the papers came Caesar's secretary Faberius, friendly to Antony, compliant, and replete with a great deal of valuable knowledge. Money was just as vital, and here the sources are murky, some of them accusing Antony of robbing the treasury of the temple of Ops to the tune of 700 million sesterces. He did not regard his act as personal robbery, since he had to run the government, and most important of all he had soldiers to pay, to keep them loyal. The main Treasury of the state was in the temple of Saturn, which Antony left alone.

Later, Antony was accused of confusing his own finances with the state's, just as Caesar had done, but in Antony's case it was thought that he had used money that was not legally his own to pay off all his debts. The facts are much too tangled now to discern precisely what he did with the money, but if Cicero is to be believed it seems that Antony was able to settle with his creditors quite soon after seizing the cash. It is very likely that there was only an approximate accounting system when Antony accumulated funds, no doubt from every source that was available to him in the circumstances. His expenses would be great; there were not only serving soldiers to pay, but plans had to be made for Caesar's veterans, to placate them by pensioning them off or settling them on the land; and some semblance of government had to function even though Rome may have been at a standstill. For a while, Antony *was* the government, and he shouldered the burden extremely well. There was so much to do in a very short time and he did not waste a single moment from 15 to 17 March. Indeed, he probably scarcely slept for a few days after the terrible events in the Theatre of Pompey.

Antony held a meeting with some of his friends at his house on 16 March. Lepidus urged vengeance on the Liberators, but Aulus Hirtius, Caesar's friend, suggested that it would be better to work with them rather than oppose them and risk bathing Rome in blood. At the same time the Liberators themselves held a meeting on the Capitol Hill, where Cicero tried to persuade them to take some action or at least make some plans and announce their manifesto to the people. He urged Brutus and Cassius, who were praetors, to use their legal power to summon the Senate themselves, to seize the day while their friends would support them, and to try to convert the doubters before they had time to think. The Liberators seem to have been paralysed and incapable of action, perhaps in shock because they had not met with the approval and gratitude of the people at having rid them of the tyrant.

On 17 March Antony presided over the meeting of the Senate, where the debate was stormy; but Antony allowed each to have his say. If he had so wished he could have had all Rome under his thumb, lining the streets with soldiers and dictating terms to all and sundry. Instead he took a calculated risk and endeavoured to bring everything as far as possible back into normal working order. Chaos was only a hair's breadth away, but Antony did not wish to impose rigid control; nor was he ready for open warfare just yet. The restoration of law and order was of paramount importance, and an all-embracing amnesty was the only way to bring it about. Cicero proposed such a measure, and it found ready acceptance.

There was a tremendous dilemma to be overcome before the state could be put on an even keel. A murder had been committed in full view of Rome and it was not just a backstreet skirmish or a drunken brawl. It was a planned assassination, intended to be conspicuous. The vexed question was how to deal with it: as an unlawful murder or the justified removal of a man who represented a danger to the state. If Caesar was innocent, then the Liberators ought to be punished, which would probably tear the state apart and precipitate another civil war. On the other hand, if Caesar was guilty, deserving of the name of tyrant, then the Liberators ought to be praised to the skies, and consequently all the Dictator's acts should be annulled. That of course was impossible, as Antony pointed out. Most of the senators owed their positions to Caesar; most of the magistrates owed their appointments to Caesar; most of the current provincial governors were in office because Caesar had put them there. Future magistrates and governors had been designated by Caesar for the next few years, to attend to government while he was to be absent on his projected Danubian and Parthian campaigns. The annulment of all his acts would be tantamount to abolishing the entire governmental system at one stroke. The chaos that would ensue if all the magistrates and governors had to be replaced and new elections had to be held would wreck the state.

It followed, therefore, that it would be better to confirm all Caesar's acts en bloc rather than to try to sift through them, confirming some and annulling others. Antony achieved this and more, in that the Senate confirmed all the existing measures that Caesar had taken; but it was agreed that there would be a cut-off date of 15 March and no new ideas should be put forward thereafter. Antony gave his consent, but without defining what would be the dividing line between the measures that had reached completion and those that were still in process when Caesar was murdered. Within a short time Antony was sufficiently confident of his power and position to start to select from Caesar's papers – probably with the assistance of Faberius – all those measures that he felt would be advantageous both to the Republic and to himself. His enactments were sensible and just; they were not revolutionary, not high-handed, not purely selfish, and nowhere near dictatorial but, none the less, the result was that people began to doubt the authenticity of what Antony said he had found among the jottings of the Dictator.

Reconciliation was the order of the day for the time being. There was to be no witch-hunt of the murderers of Caesar; no trials or lynchings or civil war but no honours for the Liberators either; so it was a fine balance to keep the peace. It was a stupendous

achievement, given the circumstances, and most Romans were probably agreeably surprised at Antony's firm but just statesmanship. As guarantee for his good faith, Antony sent his infant son to the Capitol as hostage in the camp of the Liberators; and when the Senate had agreed to the amnesty he and Lepidus entertained the Liberators to dinner. Antony invited Cassius, and Brutus dined with Lepidus. This was a public demonstration of the new concord that reigned in the city. During the meal, Antony allegedly asked Cassius if he was carrying a knife, and Cassius answered that he was, a large one, just in case Antony should show any signs of becoming a tyrant. These reconciliatory dinners were doubtless very strained affairs, an interesting amalgam of reconciliation and indigestion in equal measure. But it was the play-acting that counted – not real feelings.

Antony's task was monumental and liable to go wrong at any moment. Personal survival was the first necessity, and to have sufficient power to ensure that he remained not only alive but in charge. Eventually he gathered together a bodyguard of 6,000 men. He did not put them to any aggressive use, but it was a grim declaration of intent. He had to reconcile all sorts of disparate entities whose prime motives were alarmingly similar to his own, so he needed to combine precisely balanced amounts of seduction and subjugation, depending on the personages with whom he had to deal, at each step of the way. He was no friend of Dolabella, and had blocked his elevation to the rank of consul, but now allowed him to take up the post that Caesar had intended him to hold. The general amnesty had been successfully brought about and the Republic shakily preserved without recourse to arms.

Though Antony had earned great credit for his control of the situation, emerging from the first meeting of the Senate, as Plutarch says, covered in glory, he could not afford to rest on his laurels. There was so much more to do. He convened a meeting at his house once again. With the consent of the Calpurnius Piso, Caesar's father-in-law, and the executor of Caesar's will, Antony opened and read the provisions that Caesar had made for his heirs. The terms of the will were quite poignant. Caesar had left money and valuables to some of the men who had killed him. His gardens were to be opened to the public, and he had left money to each Roman citizen. One quarter of his fortune went to his male relatives, his great-nephews Pedius and Pinarius, to be divided equally between them. Antony was mentioned only in the second rank of legatees, so if he had expected to profit from Caesar's will as his heir in monetary terms or political influence he was disappointed. His relegation to second rank does at least vouchsafe for his honesty in not tampering with the will or trying to

forge parts of it in his own favour.

By far the greatest part of Caesar's wealth was to go to Gaius Octavius, the grandson of his sister Julia. His inheritance embraced more than just money. At the end of the will there was a clause declaring Caesar's intention that Octavius should be adopted as his son, a clause which has caused many problems to ancient and modern scholars alike. Octavius took it very seriously. He began to style himself Gaius Julius Caesar, without even adding Octavianus to his name, as he was entitled to do in order to demonstrate that he had been adopted into the Julian clan from that of Octavius. The name Octavian is now so entrenched in modern accounts that it is unnecessarily pedantic to insist on calling him Octavius.

Although adoption of an heir was a regular practice in Rome, it was nearly always carried out while both parties were still alive. It is very doubtful whether testamentary adoption had any real basis in Roman law. Indeed, some modern scholars deny that it was legal at all. This may be why Octavian made every effort to have the adoption formally ratified by a law of the people passed in public assembly. Antony made vague offers of help, but while not actively obstructing him he worked behind the scenes to prevent the legalisation of the adoption. Octavian had to abandon the scheme, temporarily. He had no intention of forgetting about it. When he became consul it was his first concern, and the law was duly passed. Octavian firmly intended to take Caesar's place, but he was careful to start out in properly legalised fashion. He could not afford to leave any loopholes for clever politicians to exploit later on in his career.

In March 44 all this was in the future. Though Antony now knew that Octavius was to be Caesar's heir, he probably had no inkling of how firmly the young man would grasp his inheritance or the use that he would make of it. On 18 March (some sources opt for the day after) the Senate agreed to ratify the terms of Caesar's will. Calpurnius Piso, Caesar's father-in-law, proposed that there should be a state funeral for Caesar, paid for at public expense. Cicero and his friend Atticus knew how inflammatory that would be, and how it would doom the Liberators forever.

There was ready agreement to the proposed public funeral in the Senate, and the people of Rome were more than enthusiastic. A pyre was built in the Campus Martius, near the tomb of Caesar's daughter, Julia, who had also been given a public funeral at the urging of the people of Rome when she died in 54. In the event, the pyre was not used for Caesar, and his funeral took place in the Forum, probably on 20 March.

Antony took charge of the ceremony for the murdered Dictator. It was a highly theatrical affair, reported quite differently in the ancient sources. According to Suetonius, the whole proceedings were designed to remind the people of Caesar's achievements. A model of the temple of Venus Genetrix, which Caesar had built to honour his legendary ancestress, was put on display on the Rostra, where politicians gave their public speeches. Perhaps an architectural model had been made for Caesar before the building work began; otherwise it would seem that Antony had been exceptionally busy since 15 March, planning ahead and finding someone to create the model at short notice.

None the less, it is clear that a great deal of thought had gone into Caesar's funeral arrangements. Inside the model temple there was a funeral couch covered with gold and purple fabric, and a pillar next to it draped with Caesar's bloodstained toga. Actors had been hired to enact scenes from Caesar's triumphs, and to recite appropriate lines from plays. One was Pacuvius' 'Contest of Arms', in which the main character says 'Did I save these men so that they could murder me?' It would have been hardly possible to miss the reference to Caesar's *clementia* in sparing Brutus and Cassius and several other men who had followed Pompey and fought against Caesar in the civil war. Antony and his crowd of actor friends clearly knew their material to be able to select the most biting apposite verbiage.

When the ceremony began, a spokesman from the Senate read out the decree whereby the senators had voted numerous divine and human honours to Caesar and, more pertinently, he read the text of the oath that they had all taken to protect Caesar. It was a nice touch on Antony's part to point out, without actually saying so, that the Liberators were oath-breakers as well as murderers.

Antony made a speech, but what he actually said is unknown. The historians Dio and Appian invent noble words for him, which have no proven basis in fact. They both used the speeches to put across their own points of view to flesh out their historical accounts. Modern scholars have discussed what part Antony played when he spoke his oration for Caesar. A male relative would normally have performed this task, but there was no one who qualified for it in Rome at the time. The whereabouts of Pedius and Pinarius, named as heirs, are not elucidated, and the news of the assassination of Caesar had probably not reached Gaius Octavius in Macedonia. Even if he had heard of Caesar's death, and had set off on his journey, he would be nowhere near Rome on 20 March 44. In the universe of 'what might have been' it is interesting to speculate what might have happened if he had been present to make a funeral speech. His implacable determination to eradicate each and every assassin had not yet emerged, but it is

doubtful whether he would have restrained himself in his oration for his great uncle. In retrospect, Antony probably counted it a blessing that he had been allowed to organise the funeral himself.

Cicero, writing to Atticus about a month after the funeral, mulls over the events and merely says that a speech was delivered in Caesar's praise. He does not name Antony at this point, since there would be no need to do so in a letter to Atticus, but it suggests that Antony did make some reference to Caesar's achievements and character. Suetonius says that after the senatorial herald had read out the decree and the oath Antony had only a few words to say. But what words? Shakespeare's Antony repeatedly reminds his audience that Brutus is an honourable man, so honourable in fact that he, Antony, hesitates to contradict him or do him harm. He refutes Brutus' accusation that Caesar was ambitious by enumerating the benefits that Caesar brought to Rome. He points out that if he wished to, he could incite the people to rage at Caesar's death, but it would be wrong because Brutus and Cassius are honourable men. Behind the speech there is a controlled, cold, anger. It has been described as the speech that Antony would have liked to make. Perhaps it is quite close to what he intended.

The important event was the reaction of the people, who made it clearer than they had on the Ides of March that they did not greet the removal of the Dictator with joy. The unknown quantity is the extent to which Antony intended to stir up popular emotion or, alternatively, how much of the demonstration that the people made afterwards, threatening to burn the houses of the Liberators, was spontaneous and beyond his control. It is very likely that he engineered it all, in true demagogue fashion, in order to say through other mouths what he probably wanted to say himself. Antony was an emotional man, but when it mattered he kept his emotions under control. If he had given the word, he could have started a war, but he kept his head. He was consul, and responsible for the whole Roman world. But he had been Caesar's friend for a long time. He was closer to the real world than the high-minded Brutus and Cassius, and he knew the feelings of the people. Why should he not use those feelings to demonstrate his own at second hand?

As the funeral pyre burned down in the Forum, some of the mob headed off for the houses of the Liberators, armed with firebrands to try to burn them out. They were looking for Cornelius Cinna, because he had denounced Caesar the previous day, and coming upon the tribune Helvius Cinna, they immediately killed him, thinking he was their quarry. His head was stuck on a pole and carried round the city. Shortly afterwards they erected a tall column in the Forum, inscribed

to Caesar as *Pater Patriae*, or Father of his Country. This became one of the honorary titles of the Emperors, and had deep significance for the Roman people who were ready to worship Caesar as a god. Antony left the column in place but it became clear that the people were not satisfied with this focal point, where they had started to go to make sacrifices or to settle disputes by swearing oaths in the name of Caesar. The situation escalated when one of the firebrands who had been exiled by Caesar suddenly reappeared. This was Gaius Amatius, claiming to be the grandson of Gaius Marius, and clamouring for vengeance for Caesar. He set up an altar specifically to honour Caesar as a god. Before he could do any more damage, Antony had him murdered, without trial or legal procedure.

The altar was left in place to please the people, who insisted that the worship of Caesar should be official, with magistrates carrying out ceremonial sacrifices. Antony agreed, but it was not enough to still the fervour of the people. Riots broke out, and in an unwelcome echo of his clearance of the Forum in 46, Antony and Dolabella, working together this time instead of against each other, used their consular power and sent in the soldiers. Worship of Caesar as a god had to be stopped for the time being. The obvious desire of the people to bestow divinity upon Caesar provided a useful precedent for Octavian, who exploited it later on. It was very useful to link oneself to a god, and many families in Rome claimed descent from various deities in the Roman panoply. But Caesar was a real person, almost a god on earth, and Octavian was completely at ease in using the divine status of his great-uncle to promote himself.

The Liberators found themselves in very bad odour after the funeral of Caesar. Antony made it possible for Brutus and Cassius to leave Rome, even though strictly speaking they were still in office as praetors, and should not depart from the city. They remained uneasily in Italy for a while, gradually assembling an armed guard to ensure their safety. Antony's 6,000-man bodyguard was the strength of a legion but he insisted that the Liberators should disband their much smaller guard. They grumbled that this was hardly fair, but complied.

As a political gesture which cost him nothing Antony abolished the Dictatorship. This measure brought him considerable support, even though it did nothing to abolish the harsh fact that whoever possessed the political prestige, the troops, and the patronage of large numbers of people could aspire to a dictatorship no matter what it was actually called. Caesar was dead but Caesarian politics ruled in Rome; or, as Cicero expressed it, the tyrant was dead but the tyranny was still alive.

The government of the provinces was among Antony's next

concerns. Caesar had made most of the arrangements for several years in advance, but now some fine-tuning was necessary. The province of Spain required a strong governor who would be loyal to the Caesarians and to Antony, since the younger son of Pompey the Great, Sextus, and the remaining Pompeians, had taken over and had assembled a large army. Lepidus was dispatched as governor of Gallia Narbonensis and northern Spain, with the brief of trying to win over Sextus rather than to fight him. Gaius Asinius Pollio, a supporter of Caesar, governed Further Spain. In Transalpine Gaul the governor was Lucius Munatius Plancus, who had served under Caesar in the conquest of Gaul, and so was one of the best qualified men for the post. In the uncertain times after the death of Caesar, he maintained the position of a loyal Republican, but in letters to Cicero he showed a grasp of reality when he advised cooperation with Antony.

The Senate confirmed the provincial governors in their posts, including those that Caesar had arranged in advance. Decimus Brutus, one of the assassins of Caesar, departed to take up office as governor of Cisalpine Gaul. Brutus and Cassius were given interim tasks, namely the charge of the corn supply in Asia and Sicily, to remove them from Rome and enable them to fill in their time profitably before they took up their posts as provincial governors. Dolabella was to be governor of Syria. Antony had been originally assigned to Macedonia, but that had been part of Caesar's plans for the Danube campaign and then the Parthian problem. If Caesar had lived, Antony would have governed Macedonia after his consulship ended, and the Parthian campaign would have occupied him for some time. But now the situation had changed. Parthia had receded in importance.

The situation changed even more when Octavian finally arrived in Rome, probably in May. Cicero met him at Naples in April, when he was still on his way to Rome. In his letters to friends Cicero revealed that he was impressed with the modesty and bearing of the youth. Once in Rome, however, it was clear that Octavian intended to seize his inheritance in full, embracing the name, the money, and the political power of Caesar. Political office was not hereditary, but Octavian was not hampered by this legal nicety. Whatever political and personal rivalry ensued between any of the parties contending for power, the struggle would centre on Rome.

When his consulship ended, Antony needed a different base nearer the scene of action. He chose Cisalpine Gaul, from which province he could oversee Italy and control what happened there, as Caesar had done. Decimus Brutus was already in command there, so Antony passed a law to obtain the province and to remove Decimus Brutus from it. Octavian assisted him, actively canvassing on his

behalf to encourage the people to pass the law. He and Antony worked together, but only because the soldiers had coerced them. Besides, Octavian may have had an ulterior motive in that he was more interested in removing Decimus, one of Caesar's assassins, than he was in installing Antony as governor of Cisalpine Gaul.

The main problem, perhaps unforeseen, was that Decimus Brutus was not inclined to leave without a fight, so Antony required more troops than were currently at his disposal to persuade Decimus to go. He decided to bring back to Italy four of the five legions that were stationed in Macedonia, in readiness for Caesar's projected campaigns. He left one legion in the province and put his brother Gaius in office as governor. In that way he could control two areas at once, watching both the eastern and western halves of the Roman world.

Antony's plans for his future were sound, but he was hindered by the persistence and determination of Octavian. Whereas Antony had played down the connection with Caesar, after all due reverence had been shown at his funeral, and had managed to obliterate the name and some of the memory of the Dictatorship, Octavian blatantly advertised his descent from the Dictator, and seized upon every opportunity to remind people of him. Worse still, he vowed revenge for Caesar's death. Such inflammatory behaviour reversed all that Antony had tried to do to establish peace. When Octavian decided to display Caesar's golden chair at the *Ludi Ceriales*, the games and festivals held in honour of the goddess Ceres, Antony blocked him. When it was rumoured that Octavian wanted to become tribune in the place of Helvius Cinna, who was killed by the mob after Caesar's funeral, Antony used all his influence to prevent that too. Though Octavian was thwarted on this occasion, thereafter nearly everything played into his hands. He put on splendid games in honour of Caesar, during which a comet appeared, visible in the night sky for several days. People said it was a sign that Caesar had indeed become a god, just as had been decreed in advance when the living Caesar was declared divine. Octavian naturally found it extremely advantageous to be able to claim descent from a god, and he advertised the fact to greatest effect. Coins appeared depicting the comet, called *sidus Iulium*, the star of Julius Caesar; decorative stars appeared on the statues of Caesar; and Octavian eventually began to call himself the son of a god, *divi filius*.

Antony cannot have failed to take note of the proceedings and the power-seeking inclinations of Octavian. He has been accused of failing to take due account of Octavian, and of consistently underestimating him. None of this speculation is sufficiently accurate. Antony may have been reckless in some areas of his life but he was not a fool, and

he walked with both feet firmly on the ground. The fact that he tried to curb Octavian's efforts to connect himself with Caesar demonstrates that he realised the dangers of such a connection, but he was scarcely in a position to do more than the law allowed. He possessed considerable power whilst he was consul, but the only certain way of blocking Octavian altogether was to kill him, and Antony was not sufficiently ruthless for that extreme measure. Therefore he had no choice except to try to second-guess Octavian's next move to stay one step ahead.

The sources imply that Antony brought all his later problems on himself by his cavalier treatment of Octavian, who is depicted as the injured party, dealt with roughly by Antony at their first meeting and cheated out of some part of his inheritance because Antony had squandered it. It must be remembered that the sources are not contemporary and the account of Antony's behaviour has been revised in the light of the eventual success of Octavian. Much emphasis is placed on the fact that the poor young man was forced to sell his own property and to beg for financial assistance from his relatives Pedius and Pinarius, in order to pay the people of Rome the sums due to them according to the terms of Caesar's will. Antony was cast as the villain who consciously deprived the good Roman citizens of their rights, as well as embarrassing the innocent great-nephew of Caesar. This was part of the psychological game that Octavian was intent on winning. He was much more devious than Antony, and on occasion he outwitted him, which lends spurious support to the theory that Antony underestimated him. Antony neither underestimated Octavian nor overestimated his own abilities, but he suffered from the scandalous reputation that had already become embedded in perceptions of him, whereas Octavian at the age of nineteen was an unknown quantity. He was therefore free to establish a carefully scripted reputation for himself, mostly favourable at the time and quite definitely revised and rewritten after the civil wars. When Antony tried his hand at the psychological game, claiming that Octavian had infiltrated his bodyguard with the intention of having him assassinated, he gained no sympathy at all. No one really believed him, and quite a few men possibly wished that Octavian had succeeded. The truth will never be known. Antony may have made it all up to discredit Octavian, but, on the other hand, the ruthless young man may well have decided that he really needed to remove his main rival. It has been pointed out that the two of them had more to gain by forming an alliance, but that was later, when other parties had been eliminated.

Gradually, as a result of the devious activities of Octavian, closely

followed by the vituperative speeches and machinations of Cicero, Antony found himself out of favour with too many influential people. After the Ides of March Cicero had avoided the political scene, but he had been in contact with Octavian since the young man had arrived in Italy. In the autumn, having stood on the sidelines for several months, he saw his chance to save the state, repeating the heroic stance of his consulship nearly twenty years earlier.

Antony summoned the Senate for 1 September, but Cicero failed to attend. The meeting was arranged in order to confer upon Caesar religious honours that far exceeded anything yet seen for an ordinary mortal. At the next meeting of the Senate held on the following day, Cicero said that he had not attended the first one because he could not condone such unprecedented honours. Then he launched into the first of the diatribes now known as the *Philippics*, in which he consistently cast Antony as the foremost enemy of the state. During this first speech, Antony was not present, but naturally he heard of it and the story presumably lost nothing in the retelling. It took seventeen days for Antony to respond in kind, but his speech is not recorded. He was probably quite stunned by this attack on him. His personal quarrel with Cicero had begun on behalf of his step-father Lentulus, but it had never coloured his public relationship with the orator in any of his political dealings up to now. The resentment was most likely still festering in the background, but Antony had not allowed it to surface even in private correspondence. The letters that survive from Antony, reproduced in Cicero's own letters, are polite, reasonable, even deferential. The animosity that sprang up fully fledged is purely Cicero's, not Antony's, so the tirade presumably came as an unexpected blow to Antony.

The Roman political scene was not a suitable one for wilting wallflowers, but Cicero's speech was, in modern parlance, right over the top, and bewilderingly inappropriate as well as unfair. After striving to bring concord to the state, and indeed achieving and maintaining an admittedly fragile peace without setting himself up as an autocrat, Antony had been painted in the darkest colours as the greatest enemy of Rome since Hannibal. Like any reasonable politician with a sense of reality, he would have expected opposition, because he had encouraged freedom of speech; but when he heard of the gross accusations of Cicero he may have wished momentarily that he had taken over the city and gagged everyone while he had the chance.

The war of words went on for a short time, while Octavian steadily consolidated his position. He raised troops from among Caesar's veterans, without authority to do so. His excuse for this illegal act was that he was protecting himself from Antony. He and

Cicero were beginning to sound the same call to arms, each for their own purposes. Cicero desperately wanted to play the part of saviour, and would twist any fact to be able to do so. Octavian wanted legitimate power to enable him to avenge Caesar, and that required, ultimately, supreme power. It was only a matter of time before he and Cicero formed an alliance. The one entity that was lacking was an enemy who posed a serious threat, a deficiency that was soon resolved when it seemed that Antony was intent on emulating Caesar by going to Gaul and from there influencing Roman politics. The senators were sensitive about such things, and now that they allowed themselves to be represented more and more by Cicero they convinced themselves that they required an army to use against Antony. Octavian had an army but required legal sanction to use it, which only the Senate could give him. What one party lacked, the other could supply. War was now a definite possibility.

Matters came to a head in November. When Antony went to meet his legions arriving from Macedonia, he found that they had been subverted by Octavian, and their loyalty to him was suspect. These troops had made the acquaintance of Octavian while he was at their headquarters in Apollonia, waiting for Caesar to begin his Danube campaign. They had been raised by Caesar and were prepared to fight for him, but after his death their loyalties will have been divided between the two Caesarian leaders, so it is not surprising that some of the troops wavered. Antony executed about 300 of the ringleaders. It is said that Fulvia was with him, revelling in the bloodshed, but that may be scandalous invention. Antony then paid the loyal troops more than Caesar had left the populace of Rome in his will, but it is said that the soldiers thought it a paltry sum. It is highly likely that Octavian made full use of their vacillation by offering them even more money than Antony could afford.

While Antony marched his troops back towards Rome, he was still in control of the government. Octavian and Cicero had not yet concluded their unofficial alliance and Octavian at this juncture was simply an adventurer at the head of troops with no legal status. Moreover, he had just made a serious mistake. Impatient for action, trying to forestall retaliation by Antony, he had marched some of his army to Rome, but had failed to rouse support. He had retreated to the north to lie low for a while. Antony hurried back to Rome, fully intent upon calling the Senate together to declare Octavian a public enemy and an outlaw (*hostis*). There was every chance that he might succeed. He had primed his agents, and he had the full weight of the law on his side, especially after Octavian's ill-advised and unsuccessful march on Rome.

Then suddenly Antony abandoned the idea of meeting the Senate, and marched north instead. Two of his Macedonian legions, the Fourth and the Martia, had gone over to Octavian. He gathered the troop that were left to him, and stopped at Tivoli, where many senators and equestrians came to meet him and swore loyalty to him. The gesture was a spontaneous demonstration, and served to strengthen his resolve. He did not march on Rome, as Cicero had suggested that he might do. For many reasons, Antony withdrew. His consulship was coming to an end in a month's time. He could gain nothing except escalating problems, and he would have insufficient time to resolve them if he went back to Rome; but now he knew that there were some senators and equestrians who would support him and look after his interests while he was absent. It was better to continue while the going was good, take what troops were loyal to him and use them to oust Decimus Brutus from Cisalpine Gaul. Once he was established there, he would be in a better position to build up his influence in Italy. A more hot-headed commander might have succumbed to anger and gone straight to Rome on a vengeful quest. But Antony was not ready for that and was too level-headed to contemplate it. Arriving in Rome would have been difficult enough, but maintaining a hold on it would have been even harder. Such a project required careful planning, involving either an assiduous, prolonged cultivation of supporters, or alternatively a very thorough and rapid elimination of enemies. When Antony did come back to Rome, accompanied by two colleagues, he chose the latter.

Antony proceeded to Rimini, on the border between Italy and Cisalpine Gaul. As the legally appointed governor of the province, he cordially invited Decimus Brutus to leave it. The Senate, on the other hand, ordered Decimus to stay where he was. In effect, this meant that the Senate had refused to recognise Antony, thus placing him in an anomalous position. He could not return to Rome, and if he succeeded in removing Decimus Brutus he would be committing an illegal act in the eyes of the Senate. There was every reason for Antony to establish himself rapidly in command of the province. Decimus had fewer troops and so did not put up much of a fight. He was quickly bottled up in Mutina (modern Modena), where he prepared for a siege. Antony obliged. He needed quick results if he was to avoid having to fight on two fronts. The new consuls would take up office on 1 January 43, and it was highly probable that the Senate would instruct them to assist Decimus. Cicero was already making himself the saviour of the state, and had begun to canvass for support for Octavian. As soon as the new consular year was inaugurated, he set about extracting recognition from the Senate for the young commander and his army, and there could be only one reason for doing so. Very soon

Antony would find himself at war, sandwiched between Decimus' troops blockaded in Mutina, and the relieving armies of Octavian and the consuls.

The alliance with Cicero was profitable for Octavian. He was presented to the Roman world not as a calculating opportunist bent on self-preservation and revenge for Caesar's death but as the boy-hero whose timely action had saved the state from Antony. Cicero persuaded the Senate to elevate Octavian to senatorial status, together with the rank of *propraetor* with full powers, which would give him the necessary powers and legal basis (*imperium*) to command an army. In addition, Octavian was to be regarded as having already held the *quaestorship*, the important point being that he would therefore be allowed to stand for election to any office that normally followed the *quaestorship*. This was all passed by the Senate in blatant disregard of the age limits placed upon the tenure of such political offices. Cicero pointed out that youth was not necessarily a disadvantage in political and military circles, and finally he vouched for Octavian's good character. He imagined that he could control the young man, and use him to crush Antony. That one overriding purpose blinded him to the possibility that the teenaged Octavian might have plans of his own. Cicero saw no further than placing the Senate in command of Rome and restoring the Republic to its ancient glory. When that was achieved, he thought he could discard Octavian.

The new consuls of the year, Aulus Hirtius and Vibius Pansa, both originally Caesar's supporters, were duly allotted the task of assisting Decimus Brutus, and Octavian was assigned to the same task. The war of Mutina had almost begun, but Antony still had friends in the Senate. Lucius Calpurnius Piso and Quintus Fufius Calenus spoke for him, trying to avoid war by suggesting that an embassy should be sent to Antony, to ask him to give up Cisalpine Gaul. His reply was perfectly reasonable: he would leave Cisalpine Gaul if he could go to Transalpine Gaul, to hold it for five years. He also requested, quite legitimately, that all his acts as consul should be ratified. He could hardly have expected that these requests would be granted, since he can have had no illusions now about Cicero's implacable hostility – or about the orator's persuasive powers in the Senate.

Antony showed himself fully aware of all the implications of the alliance between Octavian, Cicero, and the Senate. He recognised the weaknesses of such an unlikely association and saw through the different, not to say divergent, ambitions of each of the participants. His reply to a letter from Octavian and Hirtius is preserved in part in the Thirteenth *Philippic*, where Cicero cites passages from it and answers the points raised. It shows that Antony had a firmer grasp of

reality than many of the senators who were swayed by Cicero's oratory.

The senatorial army did not unite until spring. Octavian and the consul Hirtius made camp near Bononia (modern Bologna) where they waited for the other consul Pansa to bring up more troops from Rome. They moved closer to Mutina in March, and as they did so Antony abandoned Bononia, strengthened the blockade of Mutina, and decided to launch an attack on one of the armies before the two consuls could join forces. His intelligence networks were accurate, and it was a sound strategy to take advantage of the enemy's split forces. It nearly paid off. On 14 April Antony laid an ambush and fell upon Pansa's troops, who were mostly inexperienced recruits and were quickly routed. Pansa was wounded, and several days later died of his wound. Unfortunately Antony had no time to consolidate the victory or regroup his army. While the soldiers were still scattered, Hirtius came up to rescue his colleague, putting Antony into a dangerous situation. It is to Antony's great credit that as the evening progressed into night he withdrew in reasonable order. These bloody skirmishes were collectively known as the battle of Forum Gallorum. Octavian's part in it was to defend the camp near Mutina. He shared in the honours granted by the Senate, and along with the two consuls was hailed by the soldiers as *Imperator*, which implies much more than just 'commander', and was to become the most important title of the Emperors of Rome.

The next battle followed within a few days, nearer to Mutina. The consul Hirtius was killed, but Antony had to acknowledge defeat. He wasted no time in coming to a decision; he abandoned the siege of Mutina, rounded up what was left of his army, and set off to cross the Alps into Gaul. He was not certain of his reception there. During the previous month, it seemed that the other Caesarian governors, Munatius Plancus in Transalpine Gaul, Lepidus in southern Gaul and Nearer Spain, and Pollio in Further Spain, might join him, or at best remain neutral, but times had changed. Antony's defeat had been greeted with near delirium in Rome. In his previous speeches Cicero had tried unsuccessfully to outlaw Antony and have him declared an enemy of the state (*hostis*), but the senators had not dared to take matters that far. Now that they thought it was safe they did so with alacrity, overwhelming anyone who tried to speak up for Antony. His defeat was considered decisive. It was thought that Rome had seen the last of him. Thanksgiving to last for sixty days was decreed and Decimus Brutus was ordered to pursue and annihilate him.

It was time for Antony to take stock of the possibilities open to him. Retreating over the Alps in the cold winds of April, surrounded

by a defeated and starving army whose loyalty was sorely tried, Antony would have good cause to come to grim terms with fate. The members of his immediate family were endangered because of their relationship to him. Fortunately his brothers were loyal. Lucius was with his army during the retreat, and Gaius was safely out of the way in Macedonia.

After all Antony had done to keep the state on an even keel, punishing none of the Liberators and exercising every restraint to avoid a bloodbath in the city, Rome had rejected him. It is significant that from this time onwards, either by accident or design, Antony was never resident in Rome for any length of time. He returned to the city on very few occasions in order to attend to political details, but he always left as soon as business was concluded. The man who had marched out of Rome in 44 was still the old Antony, full of daring, light-hearted optimism, and tolerant bonhomie. The man who came back was icily thorough, narrowly focused, and murderous. As he led his army towards Gaul and an uncertain future, he probably reflected that there were other places, other armies. He was not beaten yet.

ANTONY VICTORIOUS, 43–42 BC

The month of April is not a good time to try to cross the Alps on foot since the snows have not usually melted in the passes; so even with appropriate clothing and carts brimming with supplies it would have been a difficult operation to take an army into Gaul. A major problem was that there were no supplies because Antony had not had time to gather rations before he raised the siege of Mutina and withdrew. He could not afford to delay, so the army had to live hand to mouth, content with what it could find on the march, which was precious little. Plutarch tells of Antony drinking brackish water without flinching in order to encourage the men. In a crisis he was always brilliant, sustaining hardships that might have broken other leaders even if there was hope of salvation at the end of the hardships; but in this case there was none.

Antony had no guarantee that he would not have to make war to stay alive in Gaul. Gallia Narbonensis, just the other side of the Alps, and Nearer Spain were governed by Marcus Aemilius Lepidus with seven legions; Asinius Pollio, some distance away in Further Spain, commanded two legions, and Munatius Plancus in Transalpine Gaul commanded five more, having increased the size of his original army by recruiting two extra legions together with some auxiliaries raised from native Gauls. All these commanders had been loyal Caesarians, and in the uncertain times just after the Ides of March they hesitated to commit themselves, either to Antony or wholly to the Senate. Pollio was ordered by the Senate to help Decimus Brutus, so he made a move but did nothing very spectacular.

Munatius Plancus had been designated consul for 42 by Caesar, and the appointment had been confirmed by the Senate. He was primarily concerned with his future career and was naturally reluctant to abandon the promise of advancement by backing the wrong side. Plancus' letters to Cicero bring to life, in very human terms, the situation faced by all the governors of Gaul and Spain in the spring of 43. With reference to his consulship, he asks for support in the Senate, always insisting that he is working on behalf of the Republic. In a letter to the Senate in March 43 he explains how hard he has worked to strengthen the loyalty to the Republic of his army and indeed of the province of Gaul and how he has enlisted many more soldiers so that

he is ready to protect his province or march wherever the Senate instructs him. He makes no specific mention of Antony in the letter, and promises nothing except to do his duty.

By the end of April 43 Plancus is already wavering. He thanks Cicero effusively for his support in the Senate and goes on to explain that he has heard of Antony's retreat from Mutina. He says that if Antony enters his province with no military support he will be able to resist him, but if Antony brings his army then he is unsure of the outcome. For one thing he does not trust the loyalties of the veteran Tenth legion and he knows that Lepidus is more likely to join Antony than oppose him. He says that he will need reinforcements if he has to face Antony.

As he marched across the Alps Antony would have a shrewd idea of what was going on in the minds of the three governors whose territories he was approaching. Lepidus was the most likely of the three to join him, but even he was an unknown quantity at this stage in the proceedings. Antony had no choice but to place his trust in his own soldiers, but there was always the possibility that some of his own men might suddenly decide that they had had quite enough of following a loser and suddenly turn against him. He probably reflected that loyalty is a fragile commodity, usually proportionately related to the benefits that ensue from it and more often than not subordinated to self-interest. He had few benefits to offer his men at the moment and not much prospect of being able to promise anything in the future. He was an outlaw, beyond state protection. He had no legal status and no right to command troops, so the troops who accompanied him would be classified as he was himself as enemies of the state. His death would be welcomed by many in Rome and the person who dispatched him would be regarded as a hero. Apart from his own safety, his family in Rome might suffer at the hands of the staunch Republicans. He probably did not know at this stage that Fulvia had found protection with Cicero's great friend and correspondent Atticus, who kept out of politics, did not take sides, extended kindness to all and sundry no matter what their associations, and survived to old age.

It was not all doom and gloom on the march into Gaul, despite the fact that in the mountains there was nothing to eat except tree bark, and no clean water to quench thirst. There were some brighter moments. On 3 May Antony was joined by three new legions raised and led by his friend Ventidius Bassus, who had skilfully avoided any military encounter on his way northwards. It was an equal amalgam of good luck and very good management that brought Ventidius to Antony's side. Octavian had orders from Decimus Brutus to try to stop

Ventidius but he had been singularly reluctant to make a move, and Ventidius successfully evaded Decimus Brutus' own troops which were in pursuit of Antony.

Ventidius Bassus was an adventurous character who had started life in difficult and humble circumstances. His family had been on the wrong side in the Social War, and as a child Ventidius was taken prisoner and led through the streets of Rome as one of the human trophies in the triumphal procession of Pompeius Strabo, the father of Pompey the Great. Ventidius rose via the army and attracted the notice of Caesar, whose loyal follower he had been for many years. From Caesar's side he progressed to Antony's. He was a man of initiative and determination, and became a valued officer in Antony's future campaigns. When he joined Antony with fresh troops, it meant that there were more mouths to feed and still no supplies, but it was heartening because Antony was about to enter the province of Gallia Narbonensis and he now had enough troops to counter anything that the legitimate governor, Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, might do to stop him. But in fact nobody seemed able or willing to stop him, perhaps because Antony's reputation as a soldier went before him and because potential opponents would reason that here was a man leading troops who, like himself, were experienced, battle-hardened, hungry, angry, and had very little to lose. Also, the troops that the various governors commanded in Gaul and Spain were for the most part Caesar's soldiers and were still loyal to his memory. Their hearts were not in a civil war with other Caesarians.

Lepidus posted a guard at the mouths of the passes under the command of Culleo, but when Antony's brother Lucius approached with the advance guard on 7 May Culleo made no effort to block him. Munatius Plancus sent some cavalry but they did not halt Lucius. By the middle of May Antony and the whole army were in Gaul.

Lepidus faced the most important crossroads of his life. He was one of Caesar's generals, a respected patrician, and Pontifex Maximus, thanks to Antony, with whom he had cooperated in the aftermath of the Ides of March. He was a close associate if not a friend of Antony, and probably had no desire at all to fight with him. On the other hand, he wished to retain the high regard of the Senate, without which he could not progress to higher things. He was in regular correspondence with the Senate, writing lots of words but actually saying little until he knew how matters would turn out. He could not be certain that Antony would emerge victorious from the low level to which he had been reduced. Lepidus no doubt reasoned that to throw in his lot with an outlaw would probably finish his career and also his life. He had his family to think of as well. Whatever he did would

reflect on them.

Plancus marched from Transalpine Gaul to join Lepidus at his camp, to try to win him over to the Republican cause. So did the Senate, led by Cicero, who flattered Lepidus by voting him a golden statue for his work in coming to an agreement with Sextus Pompey. The former pirate was now operating on behalf of the Senate, using his fleet to secure the Mediterranean. The honour of having a statue in the Forum rendered no help to Lepidus in his present circumstances. He stalled for as long as he could, writing anodyne reports and finally moving his legions to block Antony's progress. Antony was camped on the banks of the river Argenteus, so Lepidus camped on the opposite bank. The soldiers began to fraternise. One day Antony, long-haired and bearded, walked casually into Lepidus' camp. The alliance was forged. Lepidus wrote to the Senate to say that his hand had been forced by his soldiers. Some scholars have doubted the authenticity of the story that Antony walked right up to Lepidus' tent, but the truth about how the alliance came about does not really matter. The tale has a definite Antonian panache about it that found ready acceptance in ancient times. The disregard for personal safety, the all-or-nothing gamble, was typical of Antony. He knew Lepidus' character, and he had tested the temperament of the two armies, so it could be said that he acted upon a safe bet, but none the less it took courage to confront Lepidus' troops, ignoring the risk that one of Lepidus' officers might take it upon himself to be a hero and do his commander a favour. It would be small comfort to him to know that his potential assassin would not survive the next few seconds.

The Senate promptly declared Lepidus an outlaw. His own brother, Aemilius Paullus, instigated the proceedings, possibly to distance himself from all suspicion. Perhaps the senators did not stop to reflect that their actions had just united two of the foremost Caesarian leaders, whose desperate position gave them common cause to use the ten legions which they had at their joint disposal.

Theoretically, Lepidus and Antony were threatened on two fronts: Plancus and his legions might yet be backed up by Pollio in Further Spain with two more legions. From Italy, Decimus Brutus pursued Antony with weary troops who had been severely weakened during the siege and blockade of Mutina. Octavian was ordered to help Decimus, but he stayed put, holding onto his own troops and also those of the dead consul Pansa. Here was a rift to be exploited. Octavian had received no rewards after the Mutina battles, and although he solemnly promised that rewards would be paid to his soldiers, nothing was forthcoming from the Senate to reinforce that promise. Octavian had not been asked to sit on the committee that

had been formed to look into the question of the settlement of veterans, so he could not personally represent his own troops, nor could he protect their interests.

On a more personal level, Octavian had been informed that Cicero had spoken about him in public, saying that the young commander should be praised, rewarded, and immortalised. The phrase sounds innocuous enough in English translation, but in Latin it is a clever pun. The word used for 'immortalised' (*tollere*) has two meanings: one denoting elevation to fame and the other elimination by death. Cicero was a master of words, and could never resist the urge to be clever, especially when he had an audience. He could not dissimulate either, because he still thought that he was in control of Octavian. At the beginning he could not have foreseen that both consuls would be killed in the war against Antony, and he never seemed to grasp the fact that Octavian would never cooperate fully with Decimus Brutus, who had helped to murder Caesar. Either Cicero fatally misjudged, allowing his hatred of Antony to blind him to the purpose that Octavian had set himself, or Octavian himself put on an entirely credible performance so that Cicero believed that he had no other purpose except the elimination of Antony. In truth, all that Octavian required at first was legal command of an army. Now he had set his sights somewhat higher. The consulship was vacant and Octavian meant to have it. With unassailable political power, he would be able to obtain all he wanted – legalisation of his adoption as Caesar's son, condemnation of Caesar's murderers, and sufficient status to face Antony on equal terms.

For about a month Octavian lay low, pretending that he could not control his troops and that they would not march with Decimus Brutus against Antony. In June he sent a deputation of centurions and soldiers to the Senate to ask for the consulship for their commander. The Senate made a stand and refused. Octavian no doubt expected that the Senate would do so, but it was all part of the elaborate game to do everything as properly as he could. There was a small chance that he might have obtained the consulship after his soldiers had asked politely for it, in which case he could have taken it up legally without the expenditure of too much effort.

After the polite questions, there remained the last resort of force. When it was clear that the Senate would not cooperate with him, Octavian wasted no time in marching on Rome. Only now beginning to panic, the Senate summoned two legions from Africa and called out the legion of recruits that Vibius Pansa had left near Rome; but the senators had left it too late to take any effective action. After a little contretemps when the Senate mistakenly put their faith in a rumour

that two of Octavian's legions had deserted him, the senators confronted reality and gave in. Just short of his twentieth birthday Octavian was elected consul and took up office on 19 August, with his kinsman Pedius as colleague.

Watching from the sidelines in Gaul and Spain, Plancus and Pollio decided that their best policy was to do nothing, biding their time, awaiting the outcome. They knew Antony, and perhaps did not consider him so easy to defeat as did the Senate. Pollio followed Lepidus' example, and came over to Antony in July; but Plancus wavered a little longer, still writing reports to Cicero, expressing surprise and then dismay that Octavian had not marched to help Decimus. Plancus and Decimus joined forces in August, but then Octavian became consul and so Plancus yielded to the inevitable. He and Pollio were after all Caesar's men, more comfortable with Antony than with the assassins. Decimus' troops guessed correctly what was happening and went over to Antony. This left Decimus out on a limb, deserted except for a few officers. He went north to the Rhine but was killed by a Gallic chief, who probably did as Antony told him, or who knew that Antony would not mind in the least if he received Decimus' head as a present.

The way was now open for an alliance between Antony and Octavian. Correspondence may have been winging its way northwards to Antony from Octavian long before he obtained the consulship. This is one of history's imponderables, but it can be assumed that Octavian would cautiously sound out Antony's mood and strength before he acted. He fortified his own position before he embarked on the alliance with Antony. Once he was installed in office, Octavian's first concern was to legalise his adoption by a law of the people. As Caesar's legitimate heir he could claim all the property left to him, and more important he could place himself at the head of Caesar's considerable band of dependents and followers, or *clientelae*. Without such a following no Roman politician could hope to maintain any influence. Next, Octavian set up a special court to bring Caesar's murderers to trial. The fact that they were absent from Rome and not able to speak for themselves did not deter him; indeed, it facilitated the proceedings, which were initiated and concluded in a single day. All the so-called Liberators were found guilty. They were outlawed and their property was confiscated. Octavian's revenge was not confined to the actual murderers. He condemned several men who knew about the conspiracy but had not revealed it; they were treated as assassins even though they had had nothing to do with the actual killing.

The first stage on the road that led to Philippi had been laid.

Other stages were being prepared in the east. Brutus and Cassius had originally been assigned to Asia and Sicily with responsibility for the grain supply. Antony had allowed them to leave Rome unmolested, and had intended that they should go on to govern Crete and Cyrene, instead of taking up the provinces that Caesar had allocated to them. Brutus was intended for Macedonia and Cassius for Syria, where they would have been able to secure these important areas during Caesar's projected eastern campaign.

Both the Liberators had decided to entrench themselves and strengthen their position against any attack that the Caesarian faction might make on them. They had both begun to carve out provincial commands for themselves, collecting troops and forcibly gathering the money that they would need to pay them. Antony's brother Gaius was governor of Macedonia, but Brutus defeated him and took him captive. Cicero wrote to Brutus to advise him to kill Gaius, but for a while the noble Brutus refused. He finally gave in, probably after he had heard of the death of Cicero in Italy. He sent orders that Gaius Antonius should be executed.

By the summer of 43 Brutus dominated the Balkans and had taken over Asia Minor, where he issued his own coins with his portrait on them, which was not yet the norm in Rome where coins displayed the heads of gods, not individuals. In the eastern provinces, it was more acceptable, but it did not endear Brutus to the majority of Romans.

Cassius aimed for Syria, which Antony had assigned to Dolabella. After his consulship ended Dolabella went to take up his post in Syria, travelling via Macedonia and Thrace. He defeated and killed Trebonius, the Senate's legally appointed proconsular governor of Asia, then continued to Syria. The race began. Cassius travelled by sea and arrived first. He was already a respected figure in the east, having fought with Crassus in the disastrous Parthian campaign, and he had rendered good service in Syria in the aftermath of the retreat. With a secure following and established in a secure base he was able to divert and retain the four legions sent by Cleopatra from Egypt to aid Dolabella. These four legions, added to the eight he had already raised, brought his force to a total of twelve legions, all loyal to his cause. When he and Brutus joined forces, the Liberators were supreme in the east. Dolabella was blockaded in Laodicea, where he could hope for no rescue, and had no means of escape. In despair he committed suicide.

Cicero persuaded the Senate to make Brutus and Cassius the legally appointed governors of the territories they had seized. This meant they could legitimately command the troops that they had

gathered, and could raise revenues; but they had already extracted considerable amounts of cash and supplies from large areas of the east and it would be no comfort to the cities and towns which had been plundered to know that the Roman governors were legally entitled to tribute.

As consul, Octavian had tried and condemned the Liberators, converting them overnight into armed opponents of the state. Octavian needed no further excuse to make war on them. This he fully intended to do but he was not strong enough on his own account to carry out his plans. For full-scale warfare in the east he needed Antony and Lepidus and the twenty-two legions they had gathered in the west. It was necessary, therefore, to revoke the laws declaring them enemies, and then to reinstate them as military commanders in the eyes of the law. This task of undoing the laws making them *hostes* was left to the consul Pedius, while Octavian marched north once again to meet Antony, this time on more friendly terms, with Lepidus as ballast.

On an island in a river, probably near to Bononia (Bologna), the three generals met, conferring for two days to thrash out the details of one of the most infamous alliances the world has ever seen. Modern scholars label it the second Triumvirate. Technically there had never been a first Triumvirate; that is a convenient title invented by modern historians to describe the unofficial pact between Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar in 60–59. The common denominator is of course the fact that three men met to organise the world to their own advantage, which they could afford to do by dint of their combined military power, political influence, and staggering wealth. The major difference was that the so-called first Triumvirate was a loose and informal private arrangement, whereas the second Triumvirate was a political agreement, legally sanctioned, and properly documented, signed and sealed. The official Latin terminology was *Tresviri rei publicae constituendae* (literally ‘three men appointed to reconstitute the Republic’). The necessary law to bring the organisation into being was passed by the tribune P. Titius on 27 November 43.

The Triumvirs were to have powers equal to the consuls, so that they could coexist with the two supreme magistrates without being overshadowed by them. It was a fiction, of course, since in reality the Triumvirs were much more than the equals of the consuls, and in any case there was scarcely any danger of conflict between the elected consuls and the Triumvirs because all holders of the consulship in the immediate future would be Caesarian or Triumviral sympathisers. The Triumvirs were empowered to make laws, to nominate magistrates and provincial governors, and above all to assume provincial

commands themselves. Pompey and Caesar had shown that the way to gain and hold power was to maintain an influence or even a personal presence in Rome while at the same time commanding troops in one or more of the provinces. On the other hand, Caesar's Dictatorship for life had revealed that it was unwise to rob people of the hope of freedom in the future; so the Triumvirs put a five-year limit on their powers, giving the impression that they had merely adopted stringent emergency measures to restore law and order and that once that had been achieved they would step down.

They did not do so when the time came, and after the five years had elapsed the Triumvirate was renewed for a second term. The exact inaugural and terminal dates for the second term are not known, and were perhaps never meant to be precisely outlined, since ambiguity can be very useful to men in power who wish to keep it without being too blatant about it. Much ink has been used by historians and classical scholars in trying to establish these dates, but they are of legal and academic interest rather than factual importance. From 27 November 43 all power was in the hands of the Triumvirs. After a short time Lepidus was quickly neutralised, and so the two main contenders were Antony and Octavian. Eventually these two men between them dominated the Roman world and it was of little importance whether or not their powers had officially come to an end. Only a very brave or suicidally inclined person would contemplate bringing a charge of illegality against men who could call on about 180,000 armed assistants.

Provincial commands were very important to the Triumvirs. Antony was the senior partner, and he knew it. Moreover, the others knew it, and acquiesced in his demands for the provinces of Cisalpine and Transalpine Gaul. From this power base Italy could be watched and controlled. Lepidus was confirmed as governor of Gallia Narbonensis and all Spain. Octavian was to govern Sardinia, Sicily, and Africa: three areas which were not at peace and in some cases not even accessible; but if he could subdue them Octavian would then be able to control the corn supply of Rome. The major thorn in his flesh would be the extensive and experienced fleet of Sextus Pompey, with which he would have to deal before he could hope to control his provinces. All the Triumvirs would govern their provinces via legates while they attended to business elsewhere, not least a full-scale war against the Liberators.

Marriage ties were proposed to bind the three men together. Lepidus' son was already betrothed to Antony's daughter, as part of the arrangements whereby Antony had obtained the post of Pontifex Maximus for Lepidus after the Ides of March. Antony had no other

daughters of his own to offer, so it was suggested that Octavian should marry Clodia, the daughter of Fulvia and her first husband Clodius. Probably the marriage ties meant very little to each of the participants, but it was a public demonstration of unity for the edification of the rest of the Roman world. The pivotal factor was Antony, who bound each of the other Triumvirs to him personally by the offers of marriage with members of his family. It illustrated his supremacy at the head of the triangle.

The main business of the Triumvirate concerned vengeance for the death of Caesar, by the eradication of the Liberators. Not only the assassins of Caesar but also their entire circles of supporters and clients were targeted. This ultimate aim necessitated thorough and ruthless preparation. There would be, eventually, a war in the east with Brutus and Cassius and their followers, but there was much to do in Rome before the Triumvirs could embark on a campaign. They could not hope to achieve anything at all without the support and unquestioning loyalty of their troops, so the generation of that loyalty became the foremost concern of each of the Triumvirs. Their joint armies were in need of rewards and revitalisation; there were veterans to discharge and settle on the land and new recruits to be found to make up numbers. Eighteen Italian cities were earmarked as the areas where veterans would be given lands. It would not be a very easy or peaceful operation, since it involved the eviction of existing landowners and tenants; but the Triumvirs would deal with that problem when the time came. Recruitment of fresh troops was largely dependent upon ready cash and promises of glory, so that would have to wait for a while. The soldiers were informed of the measures concerning them and the main features of the triple alliance between the Caesarian leaders. Octavian as consul read out to them what had been agreed.

He did not reveal any details concerning the planned second stage of the programme, namely the infamous proscriptions of many of the most eminent men in Rome. A preliminary list of seventeen names was drawn up and sent to the consul Pedius in Rome, where organised mayhem resulted in the removal of these men. The city was closed off and guarded in order to prevent the escape of the intended victims. Pedius may have thought that the horrors were all over after this grisly episode was concluded but it was merely the beginning. Many more names were subsequently added to the lists of the proscribed when the Triumvirs arrived in Rome. It has been suggested that the prime motive for the proscriptions was the appropriation of wealth, since the proscribed men forfeited all their property even if they escaped with their lives. Without doubt, the Triumvirs needed a great

deal of money, for all sorts of purposes, and they were not particularly squeamish about how or where they obtained it, but as far as the proscriptions were concerned the acquisition of property and money was merely a fortuitous by-product. Any profit from the seizure of property would be offset by the payment of the rewards that were offered for the heads of the proscribed: 100,000 sesterces for free men and 40,000, and freedom, for slaves.

The deaths or expulsion from Italy of enemies, real or potential, was the prime concern. No faction was to be allowed to gain control of Rome and Italy while the war was in progress in the east. Antony could not know how long it would take to bring Brutus and Cassius to battle. The campaign might be protracted and difficult, even after a victory. Caesar had defeated Pompey in the east, but that did not end the war. He had fought in Egypt, Africa, and Spain before most of the followers of Pompey had been defeated.

Sextus Pompey was still at large, with a powerful fleet which he could use to assist the Liberators. He could blockade Italian ports, disrupting transport and food supplies for the Triumvirs, while at the same time he could carry supplies and troops for Brutus and Cassius. If necessary he could transport their entire armies, so it might happen that even if the first battles were victories for the Triumvirs the Liberators could regroup and take the war into another theatre altogether. There were endless possibilities, all of which would prolong the war. If the Triumvirs were absent from Rome for any length of time there would be an opportunity for their enemies to regain power, and then there would be more battles for the control of the city and provinces. The proscriptions were a foolproof insurance policy for the future survival of the Triumvirs.

Rome had seen wholesale murder and bloodshed before, but that does not excuse the proscriptions of 43. The episode is a stain on all the Triumvirs, equalling anything that Sulla or Marius had done in the civil strife of the recent past. There were some cold-blooded actions by which the Triumvirs perhaps hoped to demonstrate their ruthless impartiality. They included in the lists of the proscribed certain members of their own families. Lepidus was not averse to naming his brother, Aemilius Paullus, who had helped to have him outlawed; Antony put his uncle, Lucius Julius Caesar, on the list, but Lucius fled to his sister Julia, Antony's mother, and was saved by her efforts.

The most famous casualty was Cicero, along with his brother and his nephew. His son, Marcus, was with Brutus in the east. It is feasible that Cicero and his relatives could have escaped. They set off to join the Liberators, but vacillated, fatally as it turned out. Cicero's brother and nephew went back to Rome to collect money and property and

were killed. On his way to the coast, Cicero himself was caught by a party of soldiers and died bravely. His head and hands were nailed to the Rostra, which was barbaric enough, but it was also said that Fulvia had driven pins through his tongue in revenge for his having spoken the words of the *Philippics* against Antony. The ghastly tales of mutilation may be true, and if so they do not redound to Antony's credit. It is true that Cicero had ruthlessly put Antony's stepfather to death and that much later he had singled out Antony as an enemy of the state, using his own particular brand of extremely hostile polemic to stir up the Senate and the people against him. Cicero had made all sorts of accusations against Antony that spilled over from political life to deeply personal insults, sometimes so gross that no one could have believed the accusations to be true. Antony had been seriously provoked, but his treatment of Cicero after his death cannot be defended, even in the context of the barbaric times in which he lived. It is not sufficient excuse to throw all the blame onto Fulvia, since ultimately Antony would have had the final word. Once his mortal enemy was dead Antony could have allowed him a proper funeral despite his proscribed status, but instead he chose to dispatch Cicero to the next world in four separate pieces. The example was set for anyone else who might oppose the Triumvirs.

Ancient historians and many modern scholars have sought to exonerate Octavian for his part in the murder of Cicero, usually at the expense of Antony, who takes all the blame without exception. Lepidus escapes blame for the most part; but he ought to take his full share. Cicero had voted him a gold statue and tried very hard to win him over to the Senate, but if Lepidus protested about the proscription of Cicero it has escaped the record. It is said that Octavian first tried to save Cicero, but was overwhelmed by his colleagues. The truth is probably very different. While he was in need of support to legalise his position as a commander of troops, Octavian had allied with Cicero to get what he wanted and Cicero had acquiesced in the alliance because he could not find another army at short notice with which to attack Antony. There had never been any genuine friendship between Cicero and Octavian. When Antony was on the run and retreating into Gaul, Cicero thought that the war was as good as won and he had made it quite plain at that point in the proceedings that he intended not only to drop Octavian but to destroy him. Octavian had no reason to like Cicero. Indeed, there was every reason for the removal of Cicero to prevent him from stirring up further trouble. He had disrupted the peace that Antony had established after the Ides of March and it was largely due to his efforts that the war of Mutina had even begun. It would have been quite impossible to leave him active and hostile in Rome. It could be said that he had signed his own death

warrant with his eloquence. The Triumvirs could not risk the possibility that he might use it to good effect while they were absent. Octavian and Lepidus must bear as much blame as Antony for the death of the orator. It is highly probable that the very first name on the list of seventeen proscribed men was Marcus Tullius Cicero, chorused in joyous unison by all three Triumvirs.

When the two-day meeting at Bononia was ended, each of the Triumvirs came into Rome separately, on three different days, each with their entourage and many soldiers, who were lodged in the city, contrary to all custom. There could be no doubt that Rome was now firmly under military rule. Octavian as consul was the first to enter the city. When Antony arrived, Fulvia presumably left the safety of Atticus' house to rejoin her husband. The details of their reunion must remain conjectural. Antony would have much to do, of great import for the history of Rome, but also very significant for his own future. His state of mind can only be imagined. Almost two years had elapsed since the murder of Caesar, when suddenly Antony had been deprived of his friend and patron and had become sole head of state. From his point of view he had been dealt with very roughly. He had restored order in March 44 without becoming too dictatorial, he had tried to reconcile opposing parties, and the reward for his pains and what can be described as a certain self-effacement had been distrust, hostility, and ultimately exile. Spared from death by Brutus and the Liberators, he had none the less been reduced to the status of a penniless fugitive. It was exactly one year since he had departed for Cisalpine Gaul not really knowing what his fate would be. During that year he had fought battles against fellow Romans, suffered defeat, frozen almost to death in the mountains, eaten roots and bark to survive, and then staked everything – his reputation and even his life – on walking unprotected into the camp of a former ally. It could not have been the same Antony who now came back to Rome. Some characteristic points of reference were probably still in evidence in his personality but he could be forgiven if his sense of humour had been somewhat stifled and his love of wine, women, and song had become an empty routine to fill in the few hours he had to spare.

If the war that Antony had tried very hard to avoid was now to be fought after all, so be it. But it had to be done properly. There were to be no prisoners. Forgiving was merely a half-measure, and the fate of Caesar demonstrated its ineffectiveness. This time there was to be no mistake. The new lists of names of proscribed men were posted up on 28 November – the day after the act was passed confirming the Triumvirs in power. The killing began immediately, throughout Italy. The consul Pedius died of stress or a broken heart, or both. Living

among carnage, Antony cannot have been other than grim and determined. His thoughts of the future would probably have been confined to the immediate aim of eliminating the enemy. Beyond that he could not make specific plans.

Their chronic lack of money was a serious problem for the Triumvirs, who were forced to resort to extraordinary means to raise cash. Robbing temple treasuries was not quite as lucrative as it had once been, since too many men had already done it, Julius Caesar included. One supposedly sacrosanct source of wealth was the private deposits in the care of the Vestals (the priestesses who had charge of the sacred fire in the temple of Vesta at Rome), hitherto untouched. The Triumvirs appropriated all the savings, no matter to whom they belonged. This act was equivalent to a modern military junta opening and stealing the contents of all the safety deposit boxes in one of the largest banks. The sums raised by various means were not sufficient. The Triumvirs therefore resurrected antiquated taxes which had lain dormant for years, and invented new ones to fill their coffers. The consuls for 42, Lepidus and Plancus, instituted a wealth tax, which even extended to women, hitherto exempt from taxation. The system had a curiously modern flavour – that of self-assessment – which of course led to charges of attempted fraud and ugly accusations. Perhaps the Triumvirs considered that a chronic fear of reprisals would turn everyone into scrupulously honest men, so that self-assessment would yield sufficient funds without the tedious administration that tax-collection normally requires. But they met unexpected resistance from the women of Rome. Fulvia would not countenance such resistance, but Octavian's sister and Antony's mother joined the ranks of the protestors. Hortensia, the daughter of Cicero's great rival in the law courts, led a deputation to the Triumvirs to point out that women were allowed no voice in the government and ought therefore to remain exempt from taxation. The women declared themselves ready to make any sacrifice if Rome itself should be threatened, but a civil war for which they had not voted was not construed as a threat to Rome. Reluctantly the Triumvirs backed down. The number of women obliged to relinquish a percentage of their wealth to meet the taxes was reduced from 1,400 to only 400 of the most wealthy.

Since their avowed purpose was vengeance for Caesar's death, the Triumvirs had a vested interest in elevating him to the highest level – for many reasons, one of which was to ensure that the cause for which they fought was a just one. The Romans had always been adept at finding just reasons for their wars, even those which they had begun themselves without much provocation. The Triumvirs brought to

completion the original plans for deification of Caesar that had been mooted while he still lived. He was now officially a god and Antony had been designated a priest of his cult. Octavian of course benefited even more, as the son of a god. The date of his first use of his new title *divi filius* is disputed. There is evidence to show that he was using it by 40, but the better context for it is 43–42, when Caesar was formally deified, if not earlier. When he first arrived in Rome in the spring of 44 and was in need of recognition, Octavian may already have adopted the title for its immediate usefulness in self-promotion, latching onto the clamouring of the people to deify Caesar. At the beginning of 42 he could make much use of the deification to advertise himself as well as his pursuit of vengeance for his adoptive father. He reminded people of the divine Caesar at every opportunity, employing *Divus Julius* as the watchword of the army and later inscribing sling bullets with the name at the siege of Perusia. Connections with deities were not abnormal, but were usually more subdued. Antony was hailed as the new Dionysos in the east, and sometimes as Hercules. Caesar himself had claimed descent from Venus. But these associations were mythical and distant, symbolic but unrealistic; Octavian's association was with a living, memorable person, who combined symbol with reality. In that sense he was already assured of rather more credibility than Antony, whose lavish play-acting as the new Dionysos impressed but did not convince.

On a more practical level, all Caesar's acts as Dictator were confirmed. Each of the remaining senators and magistrates who had not gone to join Brutus and Cassius took an oath to observe and maintain them. Antony had attempted to bring this about in 44, but now he made certain of it. It was not simply a demonstration of loyalty to Caesar; it was the foundation for the future. Antony's past achievements and the basis upon which he fought the coming war, indeed his whole destiny, were linked to Caesar, just as much as Octavian's future goals were rooted in Caesar's groundwork. If Antony had chosen to fight on his own account, without reference to Caesar, his cause may have been a just one in his own mind but not necessarily in the minds of the Roman people. Thus it was as a lieutenant of a dead commander that he fought the Liberators, no matter that he was a consular and a Triumvir in his own right. Octavian's career as Caesar's successor was already mapping itself out, but Antony had still to create an Empire for himself.

The Roman world was about to witness another civil war, which threatened to split it right down the middle. Polarisation into separate halves was almost complete: Caesarians in the west and the Liberators in the east. In Rome and the west, Antony and his colleagues

reassigned the magistracies and provincial commands to fill the gaps as the original magistrates fled to Sextus Pompey, or to the Liberators, or were killed in the proscriptions. The consulship was obviously the most important magistracy, and must be secured for the next few years. The consuls for 42, Lepidus and Plancus, had already entered office. For 41, P. Servilius Isauricus and Lucius Antonius were designated, and for 40, Asinius Pollio and Gnaeus Domitius Calvinus. These were preponderantly Antonius' men, inherited from Caesar. For the consulship of 39, when it might be hoped the wars would be concluded, Antony and Octavian designated themselves. As for the other magistracies, the Triumvirs were accused of simply handing out commands as rewards for their friends; but whilst there may have been a grain of truth in this it is highly improbable that unsuitable or dubious characters would have been placed in important positions, however much the Triumvirs may have owed these people some sort of favour. When they left Rome, Antony and Octavian required firm control of the western provinces via their chosen men, whom they could trust. The entire western world was thoroughly Caesarian and it was intended that it should remain so for some time to come.

The east was almost exclusively in the hands of the Liberators. They now had most of the eastern provinces under their sway, and control of the sea as well. They possessed ships of their own and had a potential ally in Sextus Pompey, who was spiritually associated with the Liberators by dint of his long-standing quarrel with the Caesarians. Fortunately for the Triumvirs, neither Sextus nor the Liberators actively pursued the possibilities that this alliance held for them, preferring to act independently. The perceived threat to the Triumvirs remained just as strong, despite the lack of unity among their enemies. They could not know that Sextus and the Liberators would remain aloof from each other. As far as the Triumvirs were concerned, they would either have to fight both parties separately or, worse, they might suddenly find themselves opposed by a formidable naval and military combination.

Men, money, and ships were assembled to begin the wars against both the Liberators and Sextus Pompey. Lepidus was to remain in Rome with some troops to enable him to keep order. He surrendered seven legions to Antony and Octavian to help them with the campaign. As a preliminary move, Octavian sent his friend Salvidienus Rufus to Sicily in an attempt to wrest the island from Sextus Pompey and to clear the Mediterranean of his fleet. Much depended on the success of this venture. The transport of troops from Italy to Greece to begin the campaign would be far less hazardous if Pompey's ships were removed from the scene; and if he had been forced to relinquish

Sicily the Triumvirs would immediately gain control of the lucrative corn supply and also a naval base.

Unfortunately, the attempt was a disaster. Sextus Pompey's sailors were much more experienced than those of Salvidienus, and easily drove him off. The Triumvirs did not waste any more time on this particular project, opting instead to combine forces and concentrate on the campaign in the east. War was largely a seasonal occupation, and crossing the Mediterranean was inadvisable except in summer. So any delay would cost more in supplies and soldiers' pay and lessen the chances of being able to start the campaign that year; while at the same time the Liberators would gather strength, more supplies, and more money and perhaps even bring in the Parthians on their side, which was a very dangerous prospect.

The fear of an alliance between the Liberators and the Parthians was not a hysterical alarm without foundation. Brutus did in fact send Quintus Labienus, the son of Caesar's bitter personal enemy Titus Labienus, to Orodes of Parthia to ask for help, but this news only emerged later, after the Caesarian victory at Philippi. Quintus Labienus stayed in Parthia when he heard that Brutus and Cassius were vanquished.

At the outset of the war the situation mirrored that at the beginning of the Pharsalus campaign. Like Caesar before him, Antony had only a few ships and could not carry the whole army across the sea in one magnificent invasion. He took advantage of the news that Queen Cleopatra had dispatched an Egyptian fleet to aid him and Octavian. Her allegiance was to the memory of Caesar, the father of her son, Caesarion, so she readily aided the chief lieutenant and the heir of Caesar. Her gesture came to nothing in the end, since the fleet was caught in one of the sudden Mediterranean storms and was wrecked. It has been suggested that in fact she never sent any ships at all, sitting on the fence to see who would emerge the victor. This ignores her loyalty to Caesar as the father of her son, and denies her any desire for vengeance on the Liberators. At least the reported progress of her ships troubled the Liberators sufficiently to send out their own fleet under the command of Staius Murcus and Domitius Ahenobarbus, to search for them and to destroy them, or at least to prevent them from reaching Antony.



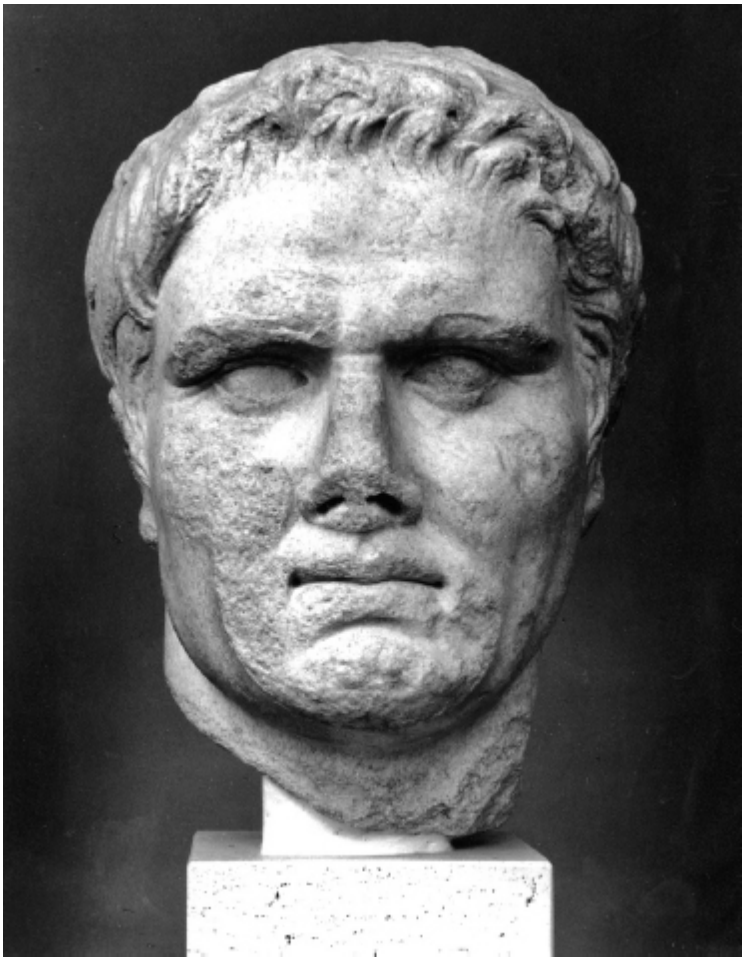
1. The Roman world at the time of Caesar and Antony. *Author*



2. Bust of Caesar from the Capitoline Museum, Rome. *Photo by K. R. Dixon*



3. Bust of Pompey the Great, who rose to fame under Lucius Cornelius Sulla by raising a total of three legions from his estates in Picenum. Pompey obtained a special command against the pirates in the Mediterranean that gave him unprecedented powers and then went on via another special command to defeat Mithradates of Pontus. His reorganisation and administration of the eastern provinces and kingdoms laid the foundation for Antony's enduring work in the same region twenty years later. From the EUR Museum, Rome; a copy of the original in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Denmark. *Author*



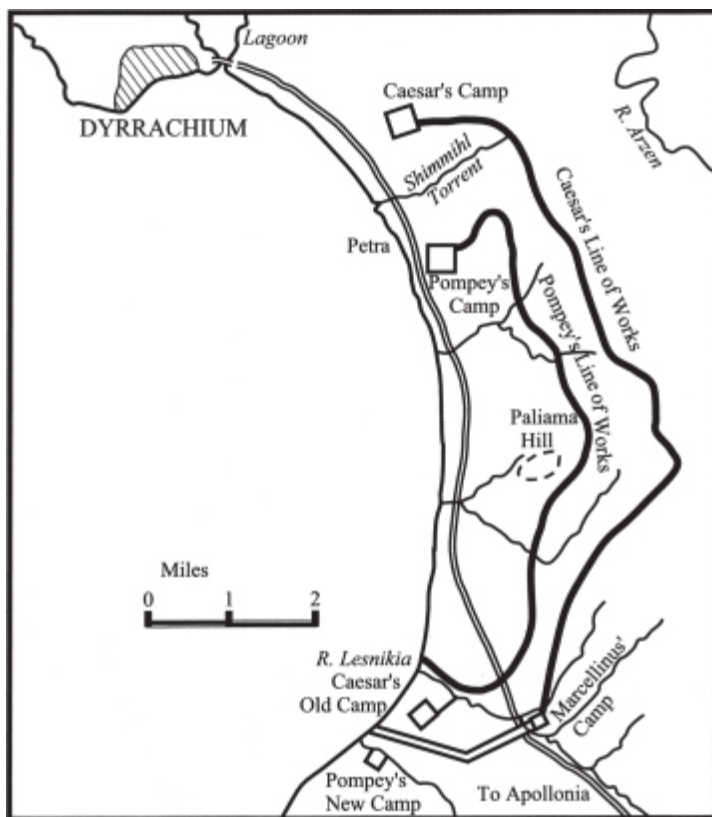
4. Slightly damaged sculptured head from the Capitoline Museum, Rome, identified as that of Mark Antony. It resembles Antony's coin portraits, showing a thickset neck and fleshy face with a wide jaw. *Author*



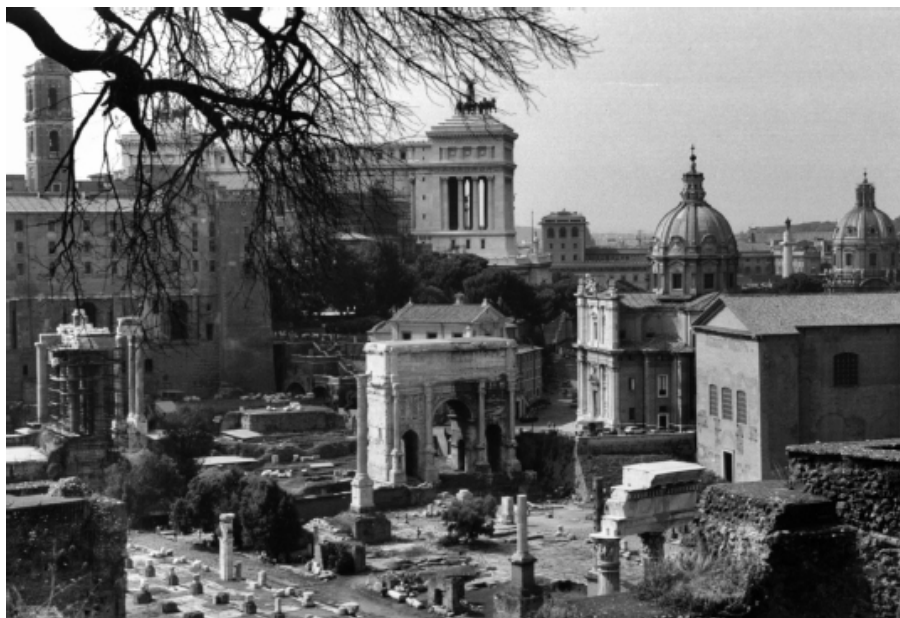
5. Small intaglio of Antony, resembling the coin portraits, and the sculpture of Fig. 4. *Drawn by Jacqui Taylor*



6. Sculptured head of Antony, showing him as an older and more-experienced man, with a fleshier face and a slightly worried frown. *Courtesy Musée Archéologique, Narbonne, France*



7. Plan of the fortifications and siege works at Dyrrachium (modern Durazzo), where Caesar surrounded Pompey's extended camp. At the south-western end of the defences facing the sea, Caesar had established two lines, one facing inwards and one outwards, but had not closed up the lines at the western edge. Pompey learned of this and attacked from both sides and from the sea. The battle was hard fought, and it was Antony who rushed to the scene to stop the Caesarian troops from running away and turn near-defeat into victory. *Author*



8. View of the Forum Romanum from the Palatine Hill. Though the later Republican buildings have been altered several times and new buildings were added for five centuries after Antony's death, there are some elements that Antony would have recognised. The Forum was the focus of political activity in the later Republic, some of it violent, as when Antony cleared the rioters by using his troops when he was in command in Italy in 46 BC. The Basilica Julia of Julius Caesar is represented by the broken column bases in the left foreground. The Senate House is the brick building on the right with three windows over the door. It stands on the site of the earlier building that was burned down in 52 BC as part of the enthusiastic funeral proceeding for Antony's friend, and latterly his enemy, Publius Clodius. In front of the Senate stood the Rostra where politicians made their speeches. Cicero denounced Antony to the people of Rome from it, and Antony made a speech at Caesar's funeral, with a model of Caesar's Temple of Venus Genetrix set in front of the Rostra. *Author*



9. The Via Sacra, or Sacred Way, which led from the Palatine Hill, through the Forum and up to the Capitol Hill, the site of the three temples of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva. Most of the site is now occupied by the nineteenth-century monument to Victor Emmanuel, the top of which can just be seen with the Winged Victory on the roof. Roman generals who were awarded a Triumph for their victories rode this way to dedicate the spoils of war to Jupiter. Julius Caesar held an unprecedented four triumphs in succession in September 46. Antony was very much out of favour with Caesar at the time because of his heavy-handed actions in putting down a riot in the Forum, so he probably did not take part. *Author*



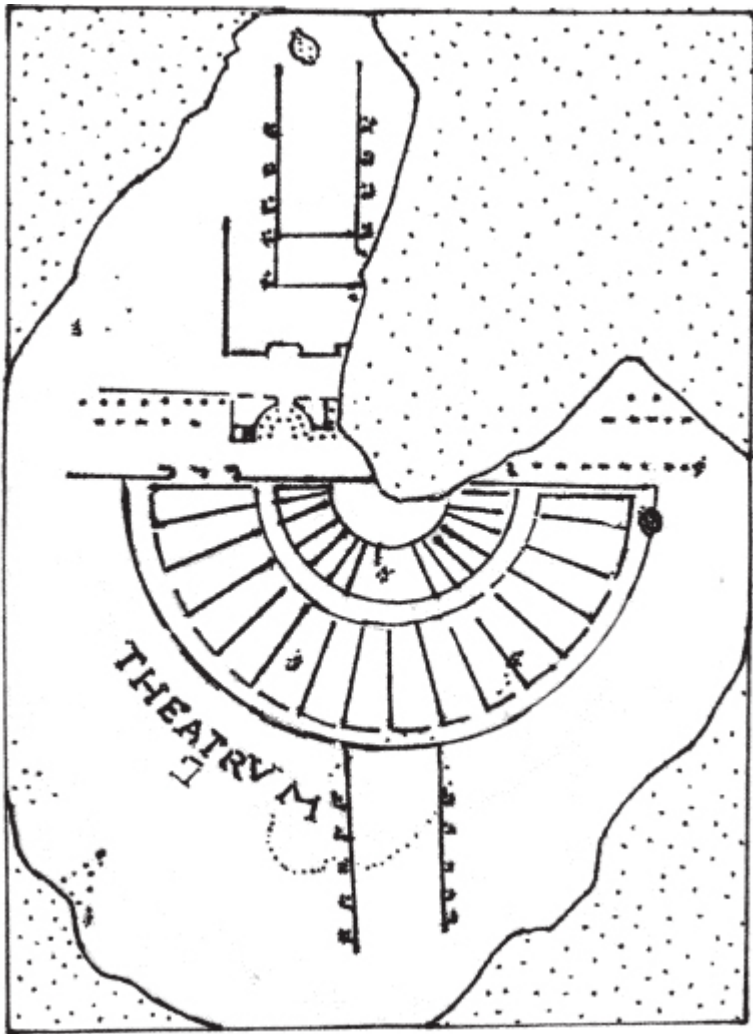
10. Ruins of the Forum of Julius Caesar in Rome, situated behind the Forum Romanum and the Senate House. It was planned before the civil war with Pompey, and building had started in 54 BC, but at the battle of Pharsalus in 48 BC Caesar made a vow that if he was victorious he would build a temple to Venus Victrix. He added the temple to his Forum, but he dedicated it to his mythical ancestress Venus Genetrix instead of Venus Victrix. *Author*



11. Reconstruction drawing of the temple of Venus Genetrix in Caesar's Forum. Caesar had a large golden statue of Cleopatra made for this temple. The statue was allowed to remain there after Octavian's victory over Antony and Cleopatra in 30 BC. *Drawn by Jacqui Taylor*



12. Silver denarius issued in 44 BC, with the legend CAESAR. DICT. QVART, showing Caesar as Dictator for the fourth time. *Drawn by Jacqui Taylor*



13. Pompey's Theatre in the Campus Martius was the first permanent stone theatre in Rome. This is how it appears on the marble plan of the city (*Forma Urbis*). This plan, of which many fragments survive, was drawn up in the third century AD in the reign of the Emperor Severus, and was hung on the wall of a temple in the Forum Romanum. Pompey's Theatre was situated at the western end, with a huge colonnaded portico running eastwards from it, just visible on the fragment of the marble plan. There was a temple, meeting rooms, and leisure facilities within the whole complex. In one of these rooms the Senate met on the Ides of March 44 BC, and the Liberators murdered Caesar. *Drawn by Jacqui Taylor*



14. Apartments on the Via di Grotta Pinta in Rome, built over the remains of Pompey's Theatre. This restricted view shows only half of the inner curve of the theatre, and gives an impression of the dizzying height to which it rose. Some of the concrete vaulting survives in restaurants in the Piazza del Biscione and Piazza del Paradiso. This monumental theatre complex would be well known to Antony, who probably attended performances in it. Many of his friends were actors and actresses, and he had a notorious affair with an actress called Cytheris. *Photo by James Eden*



15. These four Republican temples are the oldest surviving in Rome, dating from the third century BC. They are situated in the Largo Argentina and once backed onto the eastern end of Pompey's Theatre. Antony would be familiar with them, and Caesar was murdered some short distance behind these temples. *Author*



16. The Tiber Island, joined to the Campus Martius by the Pons Fabricius, the oldest bridge still in use in Rome. It was built in 62 BC, replacing an earlier bridge that may have been built of timber. This stone bridge survived a flood in 23 BC and was inspected for safety by the consuls of 21 BC, as an inscription over one of the arches attests. Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, Caesar's *Magister Equitum*, or Master of Horse in 44 BC, commanded troops on the island. After the assassination of Caesar, he put them

at the disposal of Antony. *Author*



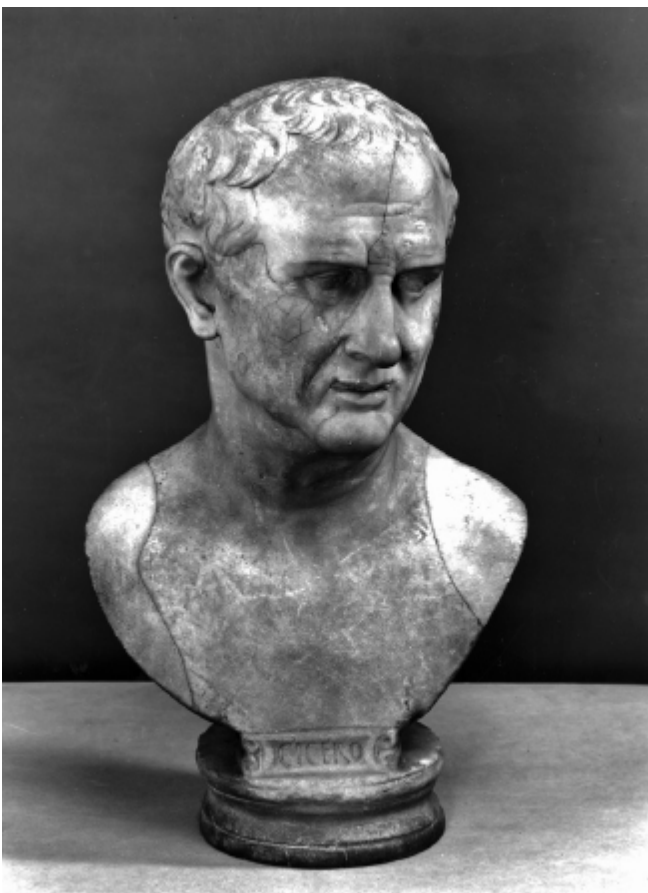
17. Coin showing two daggers on either side of the cap of Liberty. It was issued by Brutus in 42 BC, two years after the assassination of Caesar, with the legend EID. MAR., commemorating the Ides of March. *Drawn by Jacqui Taylor*



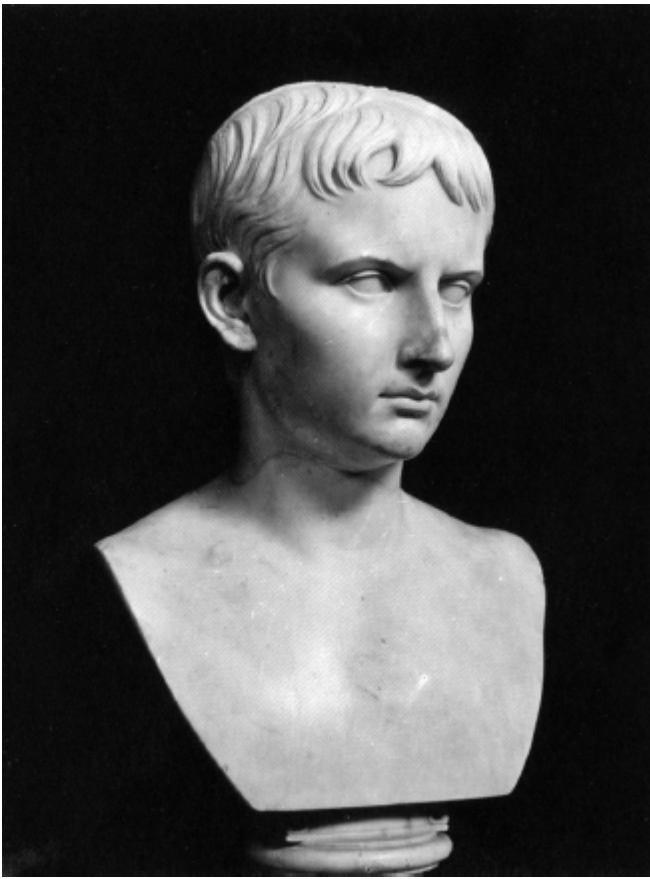
18. This silver denarius, issued in 44 BC, shows the earliest known coin portrait of Antony. He wears a beard and is dressed as an augur with veiled head. Under his chin is a *lituus*, one of the symbols of the augurs. The reverse of the coin shows a rider and galloping horses, probably associated with the Games of Apollo. *Drawn by Jacqui Taylor*



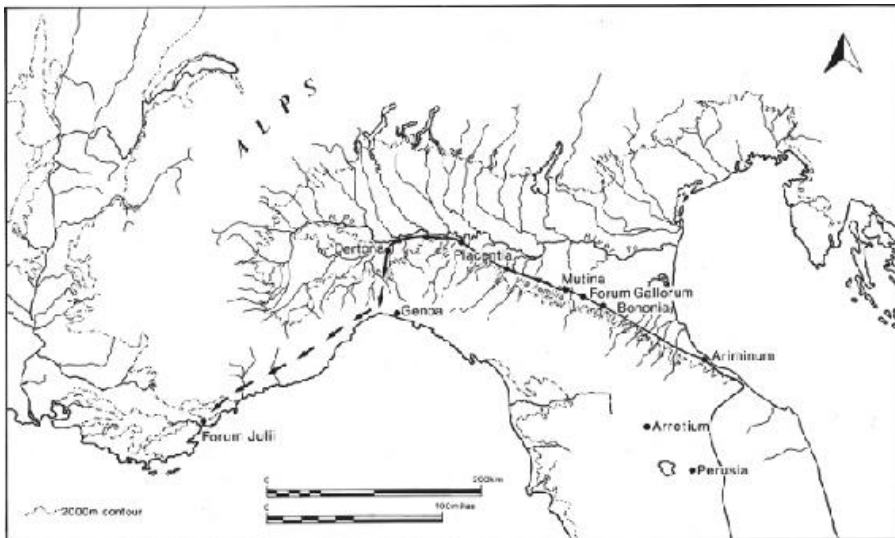
19. Antony's younger brother Gaius Antonius portrayed on a silver denarius of 43 BC. Gaius is shown wearing Macedonian dress and Greek-style cloak, or *chlamys*, and the legend proclaims him C. ANTONIUS. M. F. PRO. COS (Gaius Antonius, son of Marcus, Proconsul). This coin was issued after Antony had sent his brother to govern Macedonia in 44 BC. The reverse side of the coin shows religious symbols and the legend PONTIFEX (priest). Gaius held one of the priesthoods from 45 BC until he was executed by Marcus Brutus before the battle of Philippi. *Drawn by Jacqui Taylor*



20. Bust of Marcus Tullius Cicero, Antony's vigorous opponent. Cicero's letters to his friends, and principally to Atticus, provide a close-up of Caesar and the events before and after the assassination in 44 BC. He wrote his *Philippics* towards the end of Antony's consulship, and though they are unremittingly hostile to Antony, they provide almost the only extant information about his youth and early activities.
Courtesy Victoria and Albert Museum



21. Stylised portrait of Caesar's great-nephew, Gaius Octavius, better known as Octavian. He was only nineteen when he inherited Caesar's estate, but he was determined to inherit Caesar's political power as well. At first he played along with Cicero and the Senate until he obtained command of an army and the consulship, then he allied with Antony. *Photo by K. R. Dixon*



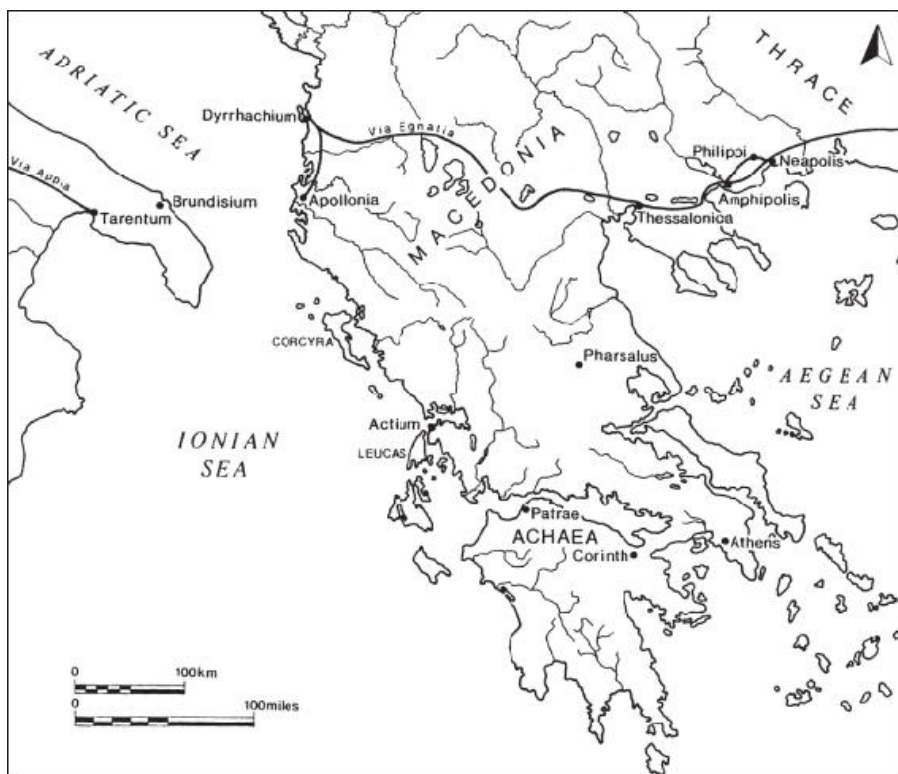
22. Map showing Antony's route from Italy into Gaul as he retreated after his defeat at the battle of Mutina in April 43. He was joined by Ventidius Bassus with three legions about thirty miles from Genoa, and arrived at Forum Julii (modern Frejus) in Gaul in May. *Drawn by Graeme Stobbs*



23. Antony as Triumvir on a gold aureus of 42 BC. The legend runs M. ANTONIVS. III. VIR. R. P. C. (*Marcus Antonius Tresvir Rei Publicae Constituendae*). The reverse shows the god Mars, with the name of Lucius Mussius Longus, one of the officials responsible for issuing gold coins bearing portraits of the Triumvirs from 42 to 40 BC. *Drawn by Jacqui Taylor*



24. A gold aureus of 42 BC issued by Marcus Brutus and bearing his portrait. On the reverse, one of Brutus' legates, Casca Longus, is named together with military trophies. This coin celebrates the raising of troops in the eastern provinces as the Liberators prepared for war. *Drawn by Jacqui Taylor*



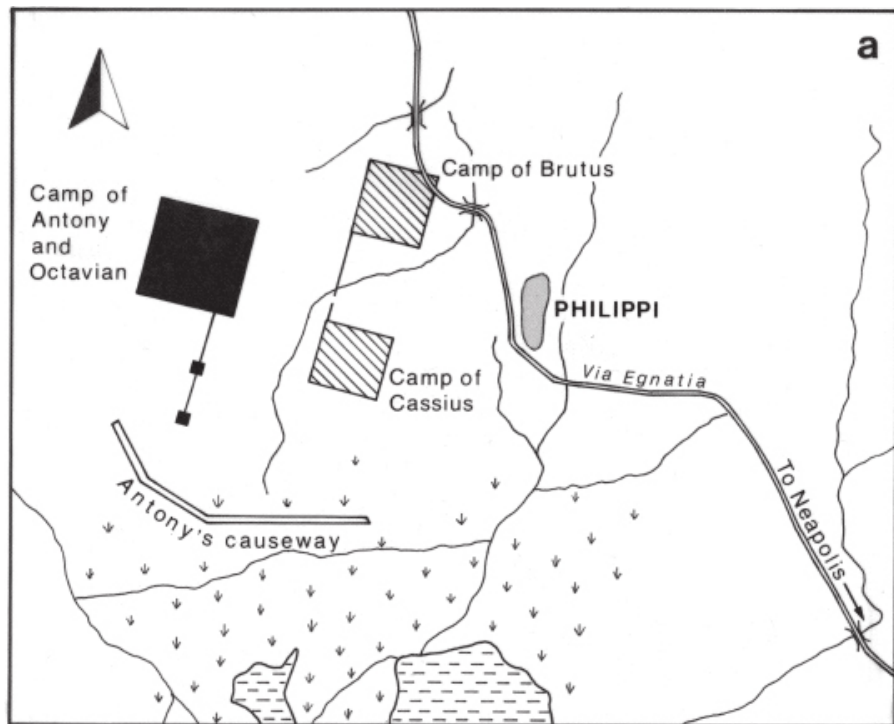
25. Map showing Greece and Macedonia indicating the places where Antony fought several battles. He was with Caesar at Dyrrhachium and Pharsalus, and won the battle of Philippi with Octavian as colleague. At Actium he faced Octavian as an enemy and met with defeat. *Drawn by Graeme Stobbs*



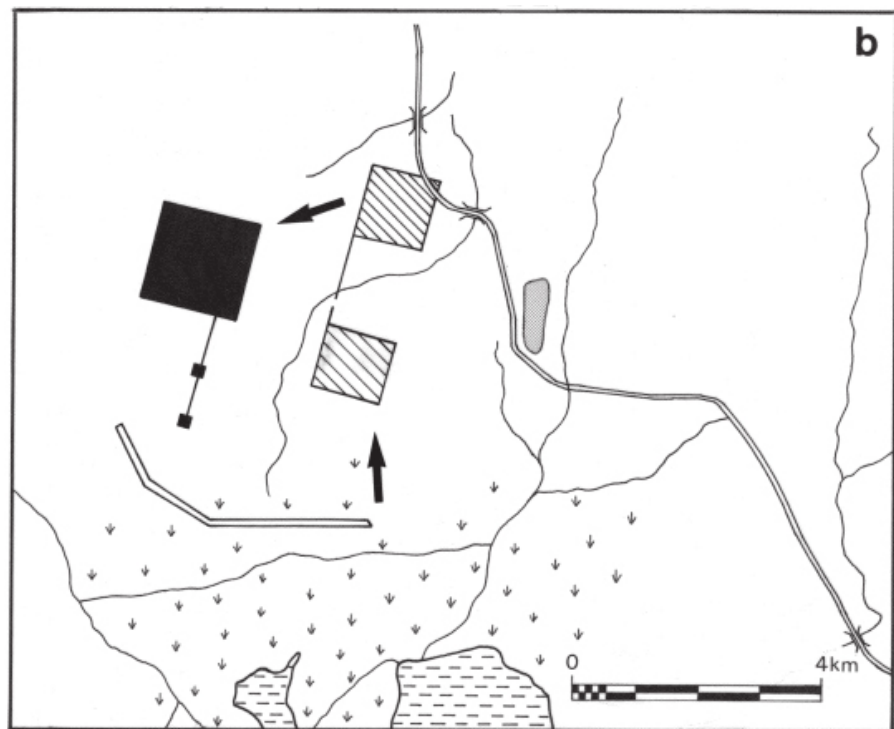
26. Remains of the Temple of Mars Ultor (Mars the Avenger) in Rome, showing the steps up to the podium, the stumps of the eight columns of the front of the temple, and some of the columns of the side wall. This temple was similar to Caesar's temple of Venus Genetrix, but it was much larger. It was surrounded by porticoes, but only the pavements survive. The temple was vowed by Octavian before the battle of Philippi in 42 BC. *Author*



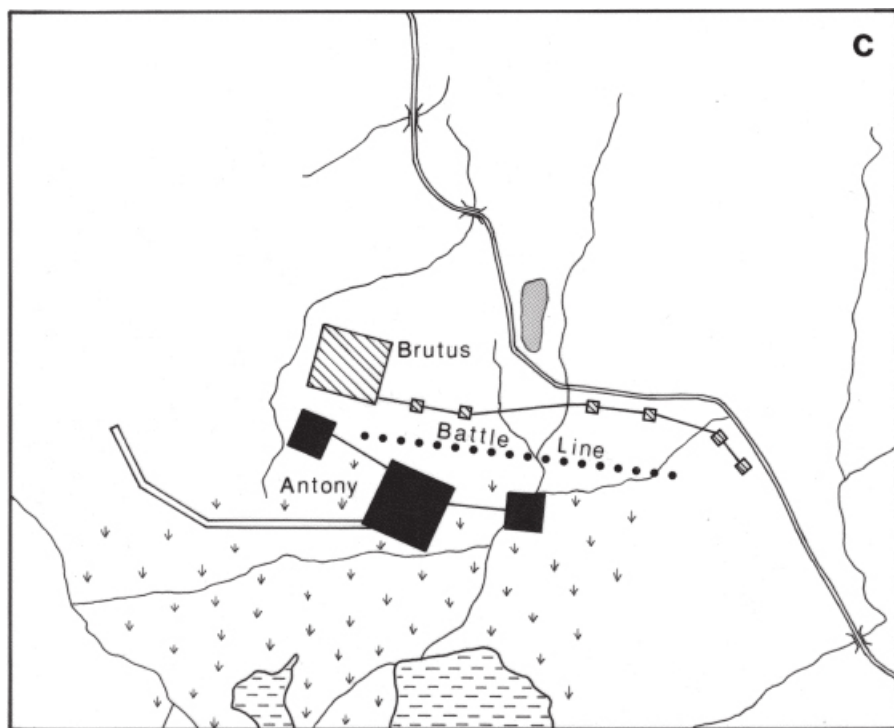
27. Coin of unknown date, usually stated to be c. 31 BC, showing Octavian with a short beard, describing himself as CAESAR DIVI. F. (the son of the divine Caesar), and on the obverse the head of the divine Caesar himself. It is not certain how soon Octavian began to use the title of son of the divine Caesar, but it is quite likely that he exploited the enthusiasm of the populace of Rome to deify Caesar after the Ides of March. When a comet appeared during the games that he organised in May 44 BC, Octavian seized the chance to proclaim it the *sidus Iulium*, the star of Julius, a sure sign that Caesar had become a god. If he did not insist on the title 'son of the divine Caesar' at this time, the portents definitely supported his claim. *Drawn by Jacqui Taylor*



28. Plan showing the stages of the battles at Philippi Oct.–Nov. 42 BC. Antony built a causeway behind Cassius' camp to cut the communications of the Liberators.
Drawn by Graeme Stobbs



29. In the first battle Antony captured Cassius' camp and drove him off to the north-east, but at the same time Brutus captured Octavian's camp. Octavian survived by hiding in a marsh. Cassius committed suicide because he thought that Brutus had been defeated. *Drawn by Graeme Stobbs*



30. Brutus occupied Cassius' camp. Antony tried to outflank him and Brutus built a series of smaller camps to stop him, but in mid-November he decided to offer battle. Antony and Octavian encircled him and drove him off. *Drawn by Graeme Stobbs*



31. Cleopatra is depicted on this silver coin from Alexandria. The portrait is unflattering and therefore probably realistic, showing the hooked nose that she inherited from her father, Ptolemy Auletes. It was said that Cleopatra was not beautiful, but possessed great charm. *Drawn by Jacqui Taylor*



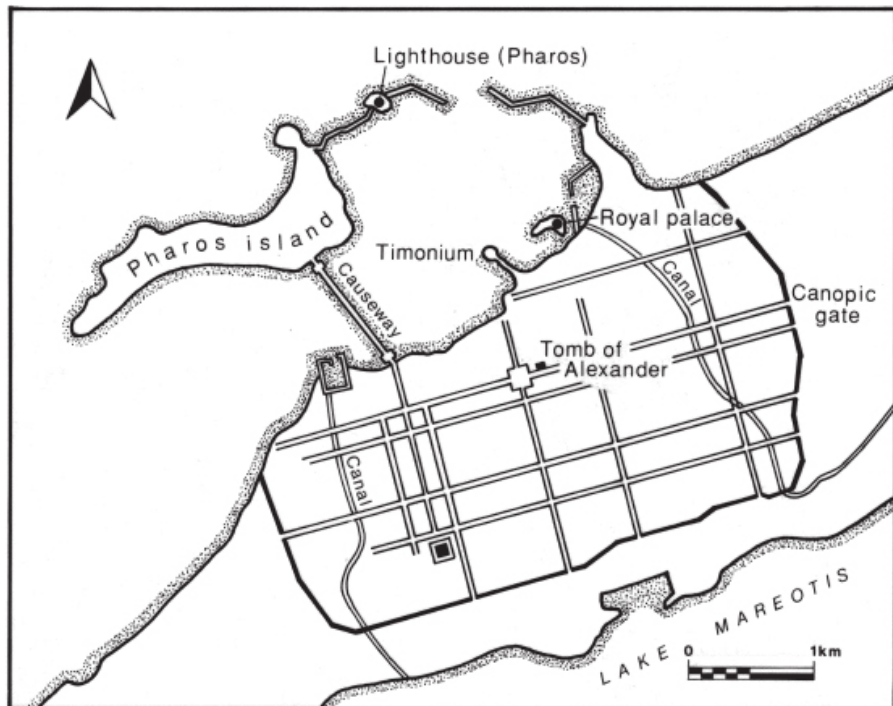
32. Cartouche showing Cleopatra's name in hieroglyphics, but it has a spelling mistake: lacking the symbol for the letter 'O'. The characters could face either to the left or the right within the cartouche, and were read from the top down. *Photo by Graeme Stobbs*



33. Drawing of a different cartouche, this time spelling Cleopatra's name properly. The character that is missing from the previous photo is shown at the top left, under the lion's paws. *Drawn by Jacqui Taylor*



34. Cleopatra portrayed as the goddess Isis, the supreme deity of Egypt. The Ptolemaic Queen consorts identified strongly with Isis, and Cleopatra fostered the old Egyptian religion and customs to a greater extent than her predecessors. *Photo by David Brearley*



35. Plan of Alexandria at the time of Antony and Cleopatra. The lighthouse, the Pharos, took its name from the island, which was connected to the mainland by the man-made causeway. There were two harbours – one on either side of the causeway – the main harbour being protected by two arms built outwards from the mainland and the island. Canals connected the two harbours to Lake Mareotis to the south of Alexandria, the most important trading city on the Mediterranean coast. During the siege of Alexandria, Julius Caesar fought the army of Cleopatra's brother, Ptolemy XIII, and took Pharos Island, then set about fortifying the causeway; but a battle broke out and Caesar had to swim for his life back to the mainland, leaving his cloak behind. After the battle of Actium, Antony retired to the Timonium on the shore.

Drawn by Graeme Stobbs



36. Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus issued this gold aureus in 41 BC. The portrait on the obverse is most probably of Ahenobarbus himself, and the reverse shows a

temple of Neptune and the legend CN. DOMITIUS. L. F. IMP. (Gnaeus Domitius son of Lucius, Imperator). Domitius Ahenobarbus was one of Brutus' naval officers, and after Philippi he kept his fleet together, operating independently of the Triumvirs and not joining forces with Sextus Pompey, who attacked and interrupted trade and the food supply of Rome. In 40 BC Ahenobarbus allied with Antony, and remained with him until just before Actium, when he went over to Octavian. He was very ill, and died soon afterwards. *Drawn by Jacqui Taylor*



37. This gold aureus of 40 BC was issued by Sextus Pompey, just after the Triumvirs had arrived at an agreement with him, recognising his command of the sea. They had little choice since Sextus had beaten off every effort that Octavian had made to defeat him. The two heads are those of Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus and the younger Gnaeus Pompeius, Sextus' father and brother. The formula on the coin runs PRAEF. CLAS. ET ORAE MARIT. EX S. C., indicating that he was now officially prefect of the fleet (*classis*) and the Mediterranean coast (*orae maritimae*). His command was short-lived, as the agreement broke down and Sextus resorted to disrupting the food supply once again. He was not defeated until Octavian and Agrippa built a new fleet, trained the crews and fought the battle of Naulochus in 36 BC. *Drawn by Jacqui Taylor*



38. In 40 BC Antony and Octavian settled their differences, and their agreement was sealed by the marriage of Antony and Octavian's sister Octavia. This gold aureus shows Octavia, who is not named, on the reverse, and Antony on the obverse. His titles are IMP. III VIR (Imperator and Triumvir). *Drawn by Jacqui Taylor*



39. Silver coin showing Antony and Octavia together on the obverse. The legend M. ANTONIUS. IMP. COS. DESIG. ITER. ET. TERT. indicates that he was Imperator and consul designate for 38. On the obverse, the god Bacchus, an appropriate choice for Antony, is flanked by intertwined serpents, with the legend III VIR. R. P. C. (*Tresvir Rei Publicae Constituendae*). *Drawn by Jacqui Taylor*

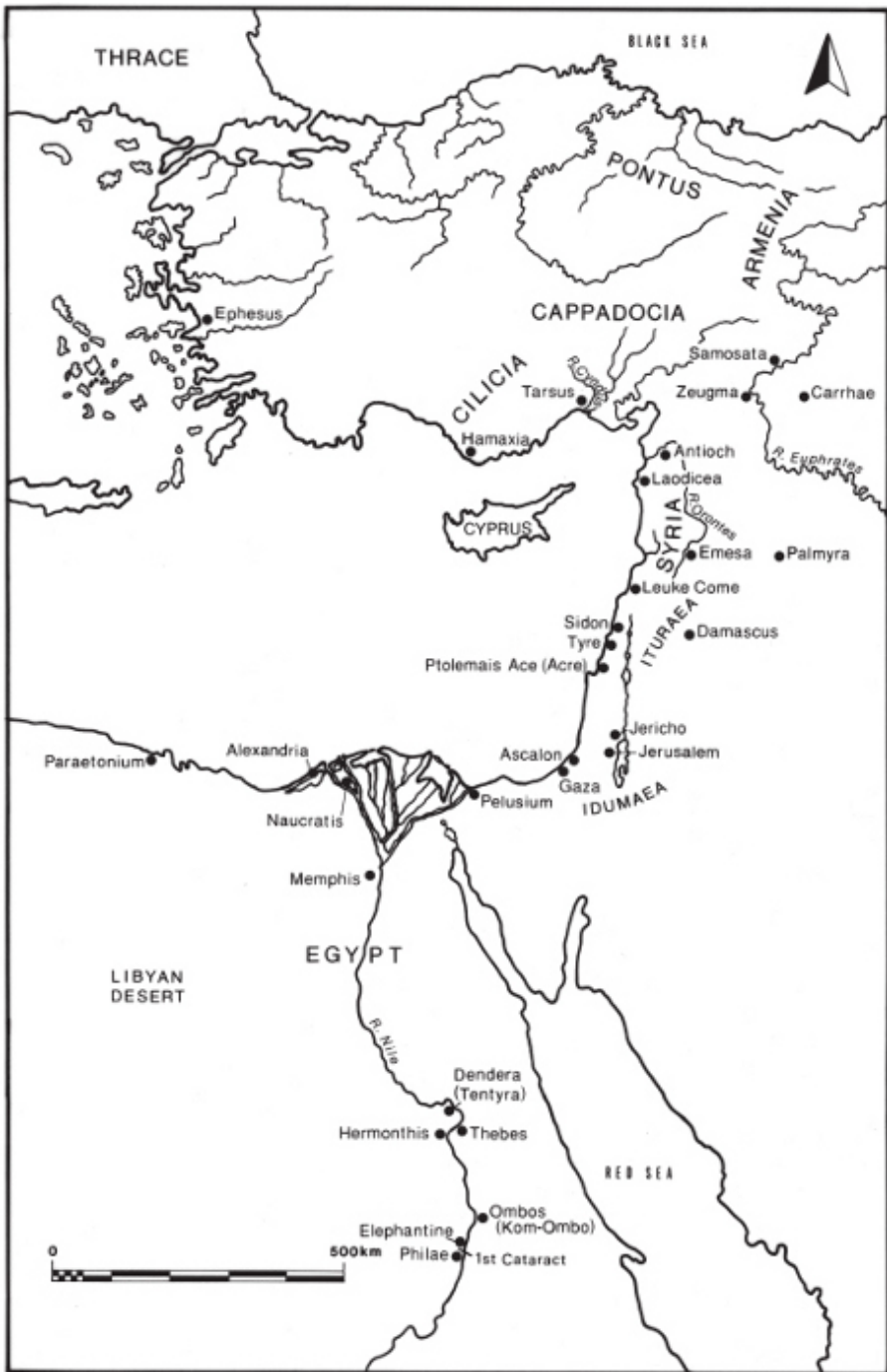


40. Gold aureus of c. 37 BC. Octavian portrays himself as the son of the Divine Caesar, and Triumvir for the second time (CAESAR. DIVI. F. III VIR. ITER. R. P. C.). Antony and Octavian renewed their powers for a second term of five years, scrupulously observing the supposedly temporary nature of their commands. The date when this second term ought to have ended is not certain, but it hardly mattered. Octavian relinquished the title before Antony did, but not until his own power was as secure as he could make it. *Drawn by Jacqui Taylor*



41. A long series of coins of this type was issued by Cleopatra c. 37–33 BC, from several different mints. On this one, Cleopatra is shown with her distinctive hairstyle, drawn back into a knot and held in place by a diadem. The legend on this

coin is in Greek. Transliterated into Roman characters it reads BASILISSA CLEOPATRA THEA NOTERA, proclaiming Cleopatra as Queen and younger Thea, a reference to one of her ancestors, Cleopatra Thea, daughter of Ptolemy VI. Cleopatra Thea was married to three successive Seleucid rulers of Syria and was widely known in the east. Effectively this coin proclaims Cleopatra as ruler of Egypt and Syria, though it must be remembered that the Roman province of Syria was not given over to her and continued to be administered by Roman governors. *Drawn by Jacqui Taylor*



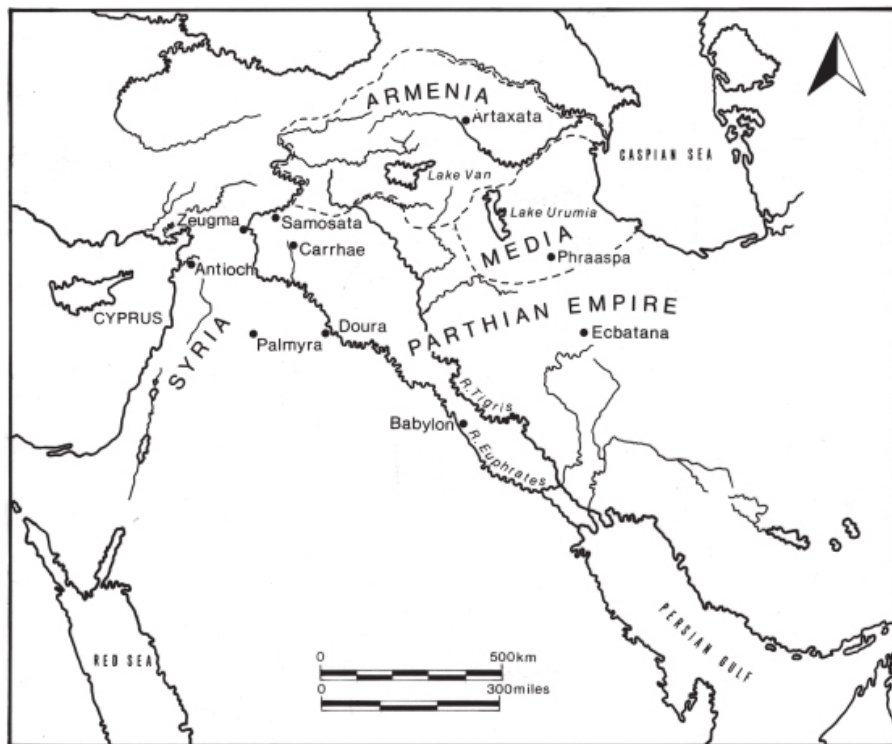
42. Map of Egypt and surrounding territories, some of them ruled by Rome and others by kings, most of whom were drawn into alliance with Rome when Pompey ended the war against Mithradates, or when Antony reorganised the east. Cleopatra was intent on reconstituting the old Ptolemaic Empire and gaining control of ports, harbours, and productive lands which would enhance Egypt's trade and replenish the coffers that Ptolemy Auletes had almost emptied. *Drawn by Graeme Stobbs*



43. Another of the coins proclaiming Cleopatra as Queen and the younger Thea. This one also shows Antony with his titles in Greek. Transliterated it reads ANTONIOS AUTOKRATOR TRION ANDRON, the Greek versions of his titles Imperator and Triumvir. *Drawn by Jacqui Taylor*



44. Quintus Labienus was the son of Caesar's legate, Titus Labienus, who went over to Pompey before the outbreak of the civil war. In the civil war between the Liberators and Antony and Octavian, Quintus Labienus was sent by Brutus to try to arrange an alliance with Orodes, king of Parthia. After the battle of Philippi, Quintus remained with the Parthians and encouraged them to attack the Roman province of Syria. Antony's legate, Ventidius Bassus, beat them off, and Quintus Labienus disappeared from history. The Parthian attacks reinforced the perceived need of the Romans for a retaliatory action, which Antony finally started in 36 BC after interruptions by Octavian. *Drawn by Jacqui Taylor*



45. Map of the eastern territories showing the location of Antony's Parthian campaign. When the campaign began in 36 BC Antony assembled his army at Zeugma as though he intended to invade Mesopotamia from the west, heading towards Carrhae where Marcus Licinius Crassus was defeated and killed. Instead Antony marched north-eastwards, and then turned south into Media, to lay siege to Phraaspa. The next stage would probably have been to attack Ecbatana, one of the Parthian capital cities; but he lost his siege train and the two legions set to guard it, and the siege of Phraaspa had to be abandoned. The disaster sealed his reputation as a failure. He planned another campaign for 33 BC, by which time he had overrun Armenia and made an alliance with Media, perhaps intending to invade from the north and from the west at the same time. The campaign was never started because Antony finally realised that he would have to go to war with Octavian. *Drawn by Graeme Stobbs*



46. Antony celebrates the conquest of Armenia (ANTONI ARMENIA DEVICTA) on this silver denarius of 32 BC. The coin is more important for its obverse, showing Cleopatra with the legend CLEOPATRAE REGINAE REGUM FILIORUM REGUM (Queen of kings and of her sons who are kings). The title 'king of kings' was widely used in the east, and does not necessarily imply megalomaniac tendencies, but in Rome such presumption would be regarded with suspicion. The coin refers to the territorial arrangements made by Antony in the ceremony known as the Donations of Alexandria. He did not proclaim himself as king, and the territories allotted to Cleopatra were those over which she already had control; but some of the lands promised to their children were not yet conquered. The proclamation on this coin merely accentuated Cleopatra's reputation for territorial acquisition, which Octavian successfully exploited. *Drawn by Jacqui Taylor*



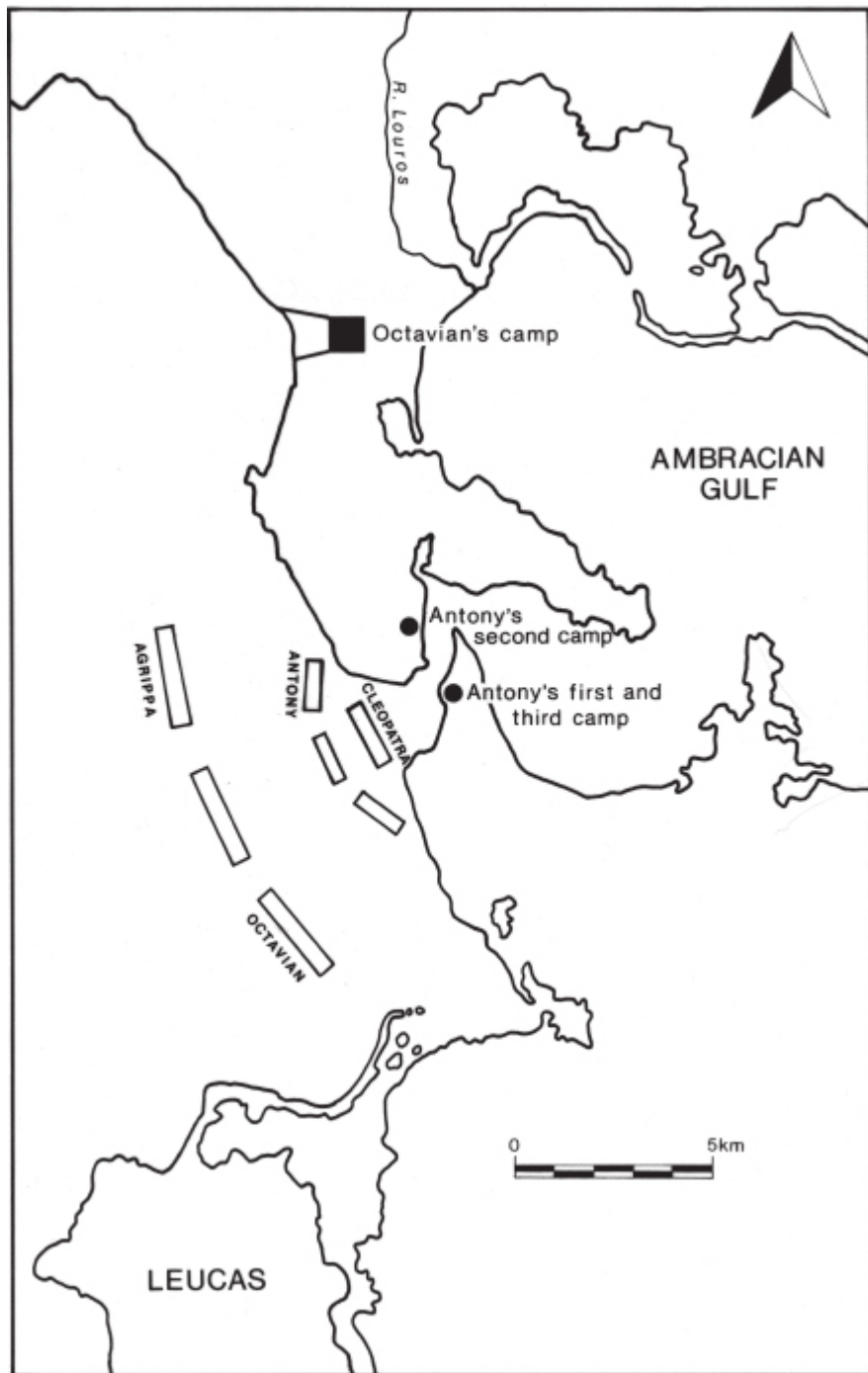
47. Antony issued numerous coins naming his legions before the battle of Actium. This one, a silver denarius of 31 BC, shows on the reverse the standards of the Seventh legion, and on the obverse one of Antony's war galleys. Antony displays his titles as augur, and Triumvir, though by this time the Triumvirate had expired, and Octavian had scrupulously ceased to use the title. *Drawn by Jacqui Taylor*



48. Silver denarius issued by Antony and Scarpus, one of his generals, in 31 BC. The reverse shows an optimistic portrait of the goddess Victory, and the obverse portrays Jupiter Ammon, who amalgamates the two major deities of Rome and the east. The legend around the head of Jupiter runs M. ANTONIO. COS. III. IMP. IIII. Antony was consul for the third time in 32 BC, but Octavian had cancelled his appointment. More important in the designation IMP. IIII., indicating that Antony had been hailed as Imperator for the fourth time, implying that there had been a successful action somewhere around the bay of Actium; but if there was such an event it has not been reported in the sources. *Drawn by Jacqui Taylor*



49. Three years after the fall of Alexandria and the deaths of Antony and Cleopatra, Octavian reminded the Romans on this gold aureus of 27 BC that he had captured Egypt (AEGVPT CAPTA). His titles are CAESAR. DIVI. F. COS. VII. (Caesar, son of the divine Caesar, consul for the seventh time). He kept Egypt as an Imperial preserve, governed by trusted equestrian governors. No senator was allowed to enter the province without permission from the Emperors. *Drawn by Jacqui Taylor*



50. Map showing the battle of Actium, fought on 2 Sept. 32 BC. In a series of skirmishes before the naval battle, Antony crossed the entrance to the Gulf of Ambracia in an attempt to cut off Octavian's water supply, but his allies deserted him and he withdrew. Octavian built walls from his camp to the sea to protect his supplies while Agrippa steadily captured the various ports and inlets of the coast,

including the island of Leucas to the south of Actium. Antony's general Canidius advised fighting a land battle in Macedonia, but that would have meant abandoning the fleet, and if they were defeated Antony and Cleopatra and the army would have to march overland to return to Egypt. Finally, Antony tried to break out with his fleet, having burned the ships for which he could not provide crews and soldiers. Soon after the start of the battle some of Antony's ships returned to harbour; Cleopatra, with the treasury on board, broke through and sailed away. Antony abandoned his own ship and joined her, followed by a fraction of his fleet. Canidius took the army overland back towards Egypt, but the soldiers went over to Octavian, who promised them money, and Canidius went on alone to Alexandria. *Drawn by Graeme Stobbs*



51. Antony's descendants included three Roman Emperors and several rulers of the eastern kingdoms. This sculptured head, from the Museum of Cherchel, Algeria, is often labelled Cleopatra VII, but it is more likely to be Cleopatra Selene, daughter of Mark Antony and Cleopatra. She grew up in the house of Octavia, Antony's divorced wife, and Octavian arranged her marriage to Juba, king of Mauretania. *Author*



52. All Cleopatra's children by Antony survived the fall of Alexandria, but Caesarion, as the heir of Caesar, represented an obstacle to Octavian. On this relief from the temple at Dendera, she depicted herself and Caesarion in the style of the Pharaohs, promoting him as her consort and co-ruler. Unfortunately Caesarion did not live to inherit the kingdom; he was sent away from Egypt after Actium, but Octavian found him and had him killed. *Photo by Graeme Stobbs*

In this brief respite, with the enemy fleet drawn off from Brundisium, Antony rapidly ferried eight legions across the Adriatic under Decidius Saxa and Norbanus Flaccus, who landed on the unguarded coast of Macedonia, then moved rapidly eastwards along the Via Egnatia to Thessalonika and from there to Thrace to guard the passes controlling the route from Asia to Europe. Thus, by his quick action, Antony managed to gain a foothold in the east. His vanguard presumably did not launch itself into the unknown; it is probable that Antony had received some intelligence of the enemy's movements on land as well as in the Mediterranean, and had acted as rapidly as he could to take advantage of it before Staius Murcus and Domitius Ahenobarbus blockaded the port and before Brutus and Cassius could

assemble an attacking force. The speed of the operation took Brutus and Cassius by surprise, and forced them to move to meet the threat. They brought their armies into Thrace and moved westwards along the Via Egnatia to block Norbanus and Saxa, who withdrew to Amphipolis and dug in. With sure connections to their coastal supply base at Neapolis, Brutus and Cassius camped to the west of a place called Philippi. The scene was set for the decisive battle.

In order to ferry the rest of the army across the Adriatic, Antony required favourable westerly winds, over which he had no control, and more ships to combat the blockading forces under Staius Murcus and Domitius Aenobarbus. He was hampered by his lack of oared ships, but even so he sometimes succeeded in extricating his cumbersome sailing transports, keeping the enemy fleet at a safe distance by artillery fire from engines mounted on barges. But it was a slow business, not much improved until he finally obtained oared ships from Octavian, when the attempt to win Sicily was abandoned and the two of them allied to bring their combined forces against the Liberators. For a brief moment Staius Murcus drew off from Brundisium, and once again Antony seized his chance. He and Octavian ferried the bulk of the army to Dyrrachium. Next Antony had to find the armies of Brutus and Cassius, and bring them to battle as rapidly as possible. Delays would only increase his difficulties over supplies for men and horses. It was like Pharsalus all over again, but that meant that Antony would have no illusions about what he was up against and could draw on considerable experience to guide him when the time came.

Octavian was too ill to march after he had reached Dyrrachium, so Antony started out eastwards along the Via Egnatia without him. He had no doubt heard that Norbanus and Saxa were entrenched in Amphipolis, and by now he would know where Brutus and Cassius were camped. Antony marched rapidly to join his eight legions in Amphipolis, where he left only one legion in garrison, and took the rest of the army towards Philippi. He sent out a small party to reconnoitre the strength of the Liberators' camp. Brutus and Cassius had utilised every advantage of the ground. They had camped across the road: Brutus in the northern camp with mountains to protect his flank and Cassius in the southern camp with his flank protected by a marsh. They had also entrenched themselves behind well-guarded earthworks. Antony kept up an outward display of confidence that he perhaps did not feel. He made camp and decided that the Liberators must be cut off from their supplies and that the only way to do that was to make a causeway across the marsh and to try to come round to the rear of Cassius' camp. He began the work in secret and was not

discovered for some time. By now Octavian had joined him, travelling in a litter from Dyrrachium, still very ill but determined to play his part in avenging Caesar, and more than likely very anxious not to allow all the credit for any victory go to Antony alone. He could possibly have dealt with a defeated Antony limping back to Dyrrachium, or even with the news that Antony had been annihilated and was dead. In either case, Octavian would take some of the blame for the disaster; then he would regroup and launch another campaign in a desperate last bid for vengeance. But if Octavian did nothing except lie in bed at Dyrrachium while a victorious Antony won the war he would be obliterated for all time. Antony would be the sole avenger of Caesar, sole champion of the soldiers, sole political conqueror. Octavian had to be there, wherever the battle was to be fought.

As a distraction to divert enemy attention from the causeway that he was building across the marsh, Antony drew up his forces to offer battle each day; but eventually Cassius realised what was happening and that his rear was threatened. He began to build counter works. It was here that the first battle of Philippi began, in a skirmish over the defences. Antony passed a few cohorts across the causeway and Cassius attacked them, so Antony committed more troops to rescue them. Brutus' men could see the fighting to the south and began an attack of their own, imagining, possibly, that they would be able to finish Antony by a swift flank attack. In the confusion, Antony took Cassius' camp, but Brutus took Octavian's, as though the two armies had swivelled round clockwise to end up at a ninety-degree angle to their original positions. Neither side could hold onto what they had gained and had to return to their bases. Octavian had prudently hidden in a bog, so he fortunately evaded capture. Later he said that he had been warned in a dream not to stand in the battle line, which may even have been true: stranger things have happened. The most important result of the first battle was that Cassius, driven from his camp, gave up much too soon, thinking erroneously that Brutus had been defeated and killed. Instead of waiting for properly authenticated news he assumed the worst and committed suicide.

Brutus was now alone, but still in a fairly strong position. He entrenched, and began the waiting game, knowing that the supply problem would weaken Antony if only he could hold out for long enough. There was no need to offer battle in these circumstances, but it is probable that Brutus' officers and even some of the soldiers thought that Antony would be quickly defeated. Their blood was up and they wanted action. They may have worn Brutus down, demanding battle, just as Pompey's subordinates had done. At any

rate, for some inexplicable reason, about two weeks after the first battle, Brutus drew up his army in battle order. Antony probably could not believe his eyes. He accepted the challenge straight away. This time Octavian's men held firm, though they were pushed back. Antony tried to outflank Brutus, which may have been a feint, because when Brutus plugged the gap by sending out his reserve Antony switched to an attack on the centre. As Alan Roberts points out in his book on Antony, it may be that Brutus simply fell into an elaborately prepared trap devised by Antony, or perhaps Antony watched carefully, seizing the chance once he recognised where the weakest spot was, and then throwing in everything he could spare to exploit it. Either scenario reflects great credit on him for ingenuity and promptness of execution.

Brutus escaped with four legions, and Antony pursued him. One of Brutus' officers, Lucilius, delayed the pursuers by impersonating Brutus and allowing himself to be captured. He demanded to be taken to Antony, who of course knew immediately that he had been duped. He did not display any anger, excusing the soldiers who had made the mistake by saying that he was rather glad that it was not Brutus, because he would not have known what to do with him. He and Brutus had been acquaintances, if not friends, and had been drawn together in the political arena. Antony probably was genuinely glad not to have to give the order to execute him. There was no deeply personal animosity between them, unlike the rancour between Antony and Cicero, even though Brutus had been directly responsible for the death of Gaius Antonius. In the end Brutus helpfully committed suicide, and his followers either fled in different directions, to Sextus Pompey or to Ahenobarbus, or they came over to Antony and Octavian. One of the most famous converts was the poet Quintus Horatius Flaccus, who remained in Octavian's circle until his death, and is known to us as Horace. The rest were killed, and it is said that Octavian delighted in cruelty, exacting the last ounce of vengeance from the deaths of some of the conspirators. He made a father and son throw dice to decide who should be spared, and laughed as the one chosen to survive committed suicide over the body of the other. The legend states that the soldiers hailed Antony as the victor, but reviled Octavian; the tale is usually connected to those of Octavian's cruelty; but if there is any truth in the revulsion felt by the troops it probably stemmed from the fact that Antony had done all the hard work while Octavian was ill. Perhaps Antony himself did not stop to reflect that courage takes many forms, one of which is the ability to overcome illness and take at least some part in the fighting. There is no need to doubt that Octavian was genuinely ill, but from Antony's point of view

the activity of the past months with Octavian in tow had probably been comparable to wearing a ball and chain. Antony could have managed quite well if he had possessed only Octavian's troops and not Octavian himself, for it is likely that he thought of Caesar's heir as more of a liability than a supportive colleague.

After the victory, Brutus' body was brought to Antony's camp. He covered the corpse with his own cloak and ordered an honourable funeral for him. Octavian demanded that Brutus' head should be cut off and thrown down at the foot of Caesar's statue in Rome. In view of his treatment of Cicero, Antony was hardly in a position to refuse on ethical grounds; so Octavian had his wish, but the head of Brutus was allegedly lost at sea while it was being transported to Italy. At the same time, Antony exacted revenge on Hortensius, the officer who had killed Gaius Antonius. Appropriately, Antony had him put to death near Gaius' tomb.

There may have been an overriding sense of anticlimax. The Liberators were dead or dispersed. The battlefields were to be cleared up. There were thousands of troops to be reorganised, or paid off and settled on the land. The provinces were to be reassigned; the whole of the east required delicate restructuring; the government of Rome and Italy was to be set on a firm foundation; friends were to be sifted out from enemies; financial affairs were in chaos; the food supply was threatened; Sextus Pompey was still at large. The list appeared endless. Most importantly, the Triumvirs, now for all practical purposes whittled down to two, not three, men, had to protect and prolong their powers. They could not disband their armies entirely and therefore had to find a legitimate excuse for keeping them. From the combined troops of their own armies and those of the Liberators, the Triumvirs formed eleven legions, five of them for Octavian and six for Antony; but since they were already in the east, where Antony would need troops, Octavian was to lend two of his legions to Antony.

When he returned to Italy Octavian reclaimed two legions for his own forces stationed in the western provinces. Octavian's task was to settle the veterans on lands in Italy and to pursue the war against Sextus Pompey. His provinces were to be Spain, Sardinia, Corsica, and Sicily, if he could win it from Sextus Pompey. If Lepidus was to be trusted, he was to be assigned to Africa in Octavian's place as governor, but if it proved to be true that Lepidus had been making overtures to Sextus and might be proposing to ally with him, then he would be deleted from the Triumvirate and Octavian would keep Africa. It sounds like a plot to discredit Lepidus, but on this occasion it did not pay off. Lepidus remained part of the Triumvirate for a few years longer, though without an important command in the wars or a

part in the decision making.

Antony took the lion's share, reflecting the seniority of his position. He was to govern the two Gauls, through his legates Calenus, Plancus and Ventidius, with about seventeen legions. Cisalpine Gaul would be governed by Pollio, pending its integration with Italy, which was to be common ground for both Antony and Octavian. With a preponderant influence in the west, unassailable at the head of large armies and trusted governors stationed there, Antony himself would remain in the east, taking up in due course the great Caesarian project of war against Parthia. Lepidus hardly seemed to count any more. Having arranged the entire Roman world according to their own wishes and for their mutual benefit, the two Triumvirs went their separate ways. Octavian returned to Italy, where his main task would be to settle the veterans on lands promised to them at the meeting at Bononia when the Triumvirate was formed.

Antony could not leave the east, which was in chaos after the upheavals caused by Brutus and Cassius. Some states had sympathised with the Liberators, some had resisted, while others had tried to remain neutral but had been forced to contribute money or supplies. The result was the same whichever side they had chosen. Many of them were impoverished or damaged in some way, and it could not be assumed that every city or state would welcome Mark Antony with open arms. There was much to do, and Antony travelled far and wide, repairing damage, hearing cases, exacting tribute, meting out punishments where necessary. The chronology is difficult to re-establish, since most sources merely tell us that Antony went to Athens for the winter, as though that was all he did, oblivious to all else. Common sense dictates that he could not simply leave the huge army that was reassembled after Philippi, nor could he ignore the immediate needs of the eastern Roman provinces and the free states. Stability in the east was the prime necessity, which entailed placing the troops at strategic locations under reliable commanders, and tactful handling of both Roman governors and client kings. That was not something that he could achieve in a few months.

When all was reasonably quiet, Antony did go to Athens, the city of his student days. He could not know it yet, but he was about to embark on the final, most glorious decade of his life.

‘A LASS UNPARALLEL’D’, CLEOPATRA, 42–40 BC

CHARMIAN:

So, fare thee well.

Now boast thee, death, in thy possession
lies

A lass unparallel’d.

Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*, V. ii.

Antony remained in Athens during the winter of 42–41. The years since the death of Caesar had been strenuous and nerve-racking; so after he had toured the eastern provinces and safely quartered the troops Antony cast off his role as soldier and became a leisured tourist. Generous and open-handed, he liked to be seen at the theatre and the games, dressed in the Greek style. He went to lectures, and joined in debates. His voluntary return to Athens suggests that as a student he had valued all that the city had to offer, and appreciated it now for different reasons. It had the advantage of being not too far from Rome but conveniently placed so that he could keep in touch with the eastern territories. Athens satisfied several criteria at once. Communications were as easy as they could possibly be in the ancient world, the climate was mild enough in the winter, the pleasures were numerous, and Antony was no doubt glad to indulge himself in culture and learning as an escape from the carnage of the past few years.

The Greek way of life appealed to him because it liberated him from the strict but frenetic atmosphere of Rome, where even as Triumvir and conquering hero he would have to be watchful at all times for anything in his behaviour that his enemies might use to bring about his downfall. In Athens he could be himself in a way that he could never be in Rome. Since he was in a position of unassailable power, he could afford to indulge himself, and no one minded that he kept the company of actors and actresses, or that he enjoyed food and wine, late hours, and leisure.

When spring came he had to attend to business once again. The Roman provinces of the east comprised Greece and Macedonia, Asia,

Bithynia, and Syria. The territories bordering these provinces were ruled by kings supposedly favourable to Rome, and there was a host of lesser kingdoms and territories under a variety of rulers who would need to be carefully treated to ensure their loyalty or, if not that, then, at least a promise of non-aggression. All these lands required much fine-tuning, especially if Antony was to persuade them to disgorge the funds that he needed to finance his various ventures and pay the troops. Reparations had to be made to those states which had suffered at the hands of Brutus and Cassius, and those that had sided with the Liberators would have to be handled delicately.

Antony left Lucius Censorinus with six legions to look after the Greek states and took two legions with him to Ephesus in the province of Asia. The populace hailed him as the new Dionysos – an appropriate divinity for Antony – the god of wine and beneficence. To a stern Roman, full of *dignitas* and *gravitas*, this was highly suspect, but it was the eastern custom, so Antony played the game according to the eastern rules. Pompey had received the same treatment when his eastern conquests had brought him fame. His earthly divinity lent Antony power in the east, and to protest that he was a mere mortal would only undermine it. Besides, his new-found status as a living god provided a counterweight to Octavian's claim to be the son of a god.

The inhabitants of the province of Asia had been bled almost dry by Brutus in 43. He had demanded one-half of all produce for two years, and had lodged his troops at the expense of the provincials. Antony's first demand for ten years' taxes payable in one year was greeted with disbelief. One of the spokesmen pointed out that since Antony was powerful enough to ask for a second levy of taxes after the Liberators had already levied the first one, perhaps he would be good enough to arrange for a second summer and a second harvest. Antony liked frankness, especially when it was combined with wit, so he arrived at a partial compromise, settling for nine years taxes payable in two years.

Having secured his cash and supplies, Antony could be magnanimous. He started off on a tour of the other provinces, raising taxes (or alleviating them where necessary), punishing, or pardoning some of the states and people who had supported the Liberators. Several cities which had supported Brutus and Cassius were pardoned because they had for the most part been coerced and in any case it was preferable to forget the past and make a new start. There was more to be gained from a slightly damaged but extant economy than an annihilated one, however much the desire for revenge might have dominated Antony's thoughts. He tried to make amends for the more serious depredations of the Liberators, and readjusted some

boundaries here and there. Athens and Rhodes were given control of some of the neighbouring islands, not solely for the political power that this would bring them but for economic reasons.

The taxes which Antony levied on all kinds of produce, and the requests that he made for voluntary contributions from rich men and wealthy states, were offset eventually by the growth of trade between east and west, though there was considerable hardship at first. It may have been in pursuit of wealth that Antony mounted a short-lived campaign, hardly to be dignified with such a name, on Palmyra. This desert city, eventually to be a wealthy trading centre bringing produce from lands as far away as India, was poised between the two great Empires of Rome and Parthia, but free from direct Roman or Parthian control. Antony probably wished to make a demonstration of his potential power, but the reasons for his actions are obscure, perhaps even deliberately deleted from the record to make him seem irresponsible. There was little to show from the raid, because the Palmyrenes simply decamped and abandoned their city, taking their belongings with them across the Euphrates and waiting until Antony's soldiers went away.

The sources do not preserve much of the detail of Antony's administrative arrangements in the eastern territories. Consequently, from the few facts that are known, it seems that Antony merely reacted to requests rather than taking the initiative himself. He has therefore been accused of dilatoriness in sorting out the complicated affairs of the east, as though he had no real political interests and was merely determined to take advantage of anything that might be beneficial to him, allowing the rest to follow its own course. On the other hand, if he had gone about his tasks in typically Roman fashion, coldly logical and brutally efficient, he would have earned a reputation for arbitrary arrogance and high-handedness.

That was not the way to deal with the east. It was probably simple enough to survey the scene from afar with an unemotional attitude, to analyse the problems and then to suggest what had to be done, where boundaries should lie and who should be subordinate to whom. But to apply such neat schemes would have been disastrous. The eastern cities had a long history and a complex and intricately entwined structure. Their relationships were volatile and changeable, so it was easy to upset the delicate balance of power but difficult to repair the damage once that had been done. Much later, the ever-cautious and consummate statesman Augustus dealt very tactfully with the east, playing a patient, low-key waiting game, interfering only when it was absolutely necessary.

Antony was not necessarily bent on revenge on those states or

kingdoms which had sided with Brutus and Cassius. He reasoned that there was no need to redefine the eastern territories, uprooting the ruling houses which had lent aid to the Liberators, unless they were demonstrably anti-Roman in attitude or policies. He dealt with each case on its own merits, provided always that his own interests and those of Rome were not compromised. It may seem that he selfishly thought of himself first, but though he arrogated power to himself it was not necessarily megalomaniac tendencies that motivated him. Personal power brought with it the capacity for patronage. That was what the people of the east generally understood. The concept of the strong, semi-divine leader and protector took precedence over any sense of corporate identity. A treaty made with Rome was perfectly understandable in a context where some of the city states had a longer history than Rome herself, but in the east the personal representative of Rome was always regarded as the more important factor, no doubt because it was more practical to contact an individual whose habits and characteristics were known, rather than an anonymous and possibly arbitrary body such as the Senate. Pompey had established sound administrative arrangements for the east for which he made every effort to obtain ratification from the Senate, but none the less he did not relinquish his position as influential personal liaison between the various eastern cities and Rome, nor did he give up the potential source of wealth that this position automatically conferred on him. Gifts flowed in and loans were made, for which Pompey charged interest and collected it assiduously. Antony simply followed suit, especially since his financial needs outweighed any other consideration, and probably always would. Apart from his own personal needs, he had a large army and his administrative personnel to pay and feed.

In preparation for Antony's projected Parthian campaign, the states bordering on the Parthian Empire required subtle wooing. Even when there were no hostilities with Parthia, the Romans needed to maintain good relations with these border states in order to keep open the major routes through them, and to obtain reliable intelligence about Parthian intentions. In wartime, the border territories would be in the front line if the Parthians attacked, and consequently in a good position to cut off any Roman forces which might invade Parthia. It was prudent to be on good terms with rulers of those territories through which one needed to march home, either confidently as victors, or more especially if the army was in abject retreat. The loyalty of the border cities and states had to be earned or bought, and then assiduously cultivated.

The territory of Galatia in modern central Turkey was ruled by

Deiotarus, who had sided with Brutus and Cassius during the civil wars. Antony did not supplant him. It was better to rely on a king who knew his people and terrain than to try to find a suitable substitute who might change allegiance or be ejected as soon as the Romans were removed to a safe distance. In eastern Turkey the kingdom of Cappadocia was in turmoil because there were two rival claimants: Archelaus (also called Sisina) and Ariarathes, both of whom were fighting for the throne. Antony made a tour of inspection and installed Ariarathes as king. It is said that he had a brief affair with Glaphyra, the mother of Archelaus, but in this instance he may not have initiated the proceedings himself. The episode sounds much more like an effort on Glaphyra's part to influence Antony, and a shameless exploitation on Antony's part of whatever offers came his way. It also demonstrates that he made decisions quite independently of attempts to seduce him. His choice of Ariarathes may have suited the needs of the moment, but he had to revise his opinion later. Ariarathes did not prove loyal, and in the end Glaphyra's son, Archelaus, was given the kingdom of Cappadocia. Between them, the rulers of Galatia and Cappadocia watched large areas of the east in close proximity to Parthia.

There remained Armenia, the continual source of tension in Roman and Parthian politics; but before attempting to solve that particular problem Antony turned his attentions to Egypt. He needed vast quantities of money and also a fleet, and though he had set about obtaining the former and building the latter, the resources of Egypt would further his projects considerably. He did not want to go to Egypt personally, because that would place him in the position of suppliant, and make it seem as though he was subordinate to Queen Cleopatra. Playing the part of victorious Roman Triumvir, he established his headquarters at Tarsus in Cilicia, and sent his envoy Quintus Dellius to Alexandria to summon the Queen of Egypt to meet him.

From this time onwards, Egypt and Cleopatra played an increasingly important part in Antony's life. It is time to look at them a little more closely. Antony had perhaps followed Cleopatra's career since he last saw her in Rome after the assassination of Caesar. She had consolidated her hold on Egypt and set about increasing its wealth and political strength with determination and ruthlessness. Cleopatra is such an overwhelming historical figure that it is easy to overlook the fact that she may never have entered history at all if Pompey the Great had not travelled to Egypt after the battle of Pharsalus and Julius Caesar had not followed him there.

According to Caesar's account of the Alexandrian war, which was probably finished by one of the Caesarian officers, Aulus Hirtius,

Ptolemy Auletes had specified in his will that his kingdom was to be shared by his daughter, Cleopatra, and his son, the elder Ptolemy, who was still only a boy, younger than Cleopatra. There is some slight suspicion attached to this assertion, since it mirrors precisely the arrangements that Caesar made, and it may be propaganda issued after the event to justify his actions.

If the terms of Auletes' will are true, it is significant that in bequeathing Egypt to Cleopatra he ignored the claims of the other siblings: Cleopatra's sister Arsinoe and her brother, the child also called Ptolemy. When Auletes died in 51, the situation was ripe for civil war, as supporters of the two sisters and the elder Ptolemy agitated for supremacy. By the time that Caesar arrived in Alexandria, Ptolemy's faction had gained the upper hand. Cleopatra had been driven into hiding and had to be secretly conveyed to Caesar, allegedly wrapped in a carpet. She possessed an army, and without Caesar's intervention she may have fought successfully to defeat her brother, but it is equally possible that she would have been defeated and eliminated. Fortunately for historians, playwrights, and novelists, she was aided in her task when Caesar decided in her favour and fought the Egyptian civil war on her behalf. Caesar was not wholly altruistic. It was in his interests to install a ruler in Egypt who would be loyal to him first and the Romans second, and in this he acted no differently than he would have done for any other kingdom that was useful to Rome, except that in this case Cleopatra was a woman, a queen and not a king; and the situation was even more complicated because she gave birth to a son who may or may not have been Caesar's own.

Cleopatra was the seventh of that name and last of the Ptolemaic rulers of Egypt. She was supremely clever, articulate, witty, and shrewd, and she moved and acted with an acknowledged charm. It was this rather than physical beauty that made her famous and bewitching in her own time. According to Plutarch, she spoke several languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, Ethiopian, Syriac, Parthian, and Median. She spoke the native Egyptian tongue, the first of the Greek Ptolemies to make the effort to speak to their subjects in their own language. Latin is not among the languages that Plutarch mentions, but it was perhaps taken as read that she had learned at least the rudiments of the language spoken by the most dominant state in the ancient world. There may have been more than the social motive behind the learning of languages, of course, because those who do not speak a language sufficiently well must rely upon interpreters, and can be so much more easily cheated or betrayed. Cleopatra did not intend to be cheated or betrayed, either in the political or economic spheres. She had a good

head for business and finance, and a decided sense of her own and her country's importance.

Cleopatra was born in 69, the daughter of Ptolemy Auletes and an unknown consort. Stories that her mother was only a mistress and not a wife of Auletes can be discounted; but, despite much speculation, no one can say with any certainty who was her mother. This was not necessarily a handicap in Egypt, especially for one of the younger members of the Ptolemaic brood, who could not realistically hope to inherit the kingdom in her own right. Mere survival in the Royal household of the Ptolemies was something of a miracle, since they had been murdering each other with monotonous regularity since the fourth century BC, when Ptolemy Soter kidnapped the corpse of Alexander the Great and rushed to Egypt to install himself as its ruler, Ptolemy I.

With hindsight, it seems that Auletes deliberately groomed Cleopatra for the succession. His elder daughter, Berenice, had rebelled against him and expelled him from the kingdom. She had been executed when Gabinius, accompanied by Antony, had helped Auletes to regain his throne. There may have been others daughters besides Berenice, since there is a garbled tradition that there was another Cleopatra, called Tryphaena, after her mother. If there was another daughter, very little notice was taken of her by the ancient historians; perhaps she died young before Cleopatra herself was born.

Just before the death of Auletes, it is possible that he and Cleopatra had established a joint rule, since papyrus evidence attests that the last year of the reign of Auletes was also the first year of Cleopatra's. The reigns of the Ptolemies were normally counted from the day when one ruler died and the next one succeeded, so the papyrus evidence cannot be dismissed as an indication that Auletes died, and Cleopatra succeeded him in the same year. It seems that there was a definite overlap, with Auletes and Cleopatra ruling together from about 52 or 51, before the outbreak of the civil war between brother and sister after the death of Auletes.

Caesar at first attempted to set Cleopatra and her brother Ptolemy XIII on the throne as joint rulers, but events turned out otherwise. The Egyptian factions resumed their civil war, and Caesar allowed Ptolemy to leave the Royal Palace and join his armies, which surrounded Caesar and Cleopatra in Alexandria. Unknown to the Egyptians, Caesar had asked his ally, Mithradates of Pergamum, to collect troops in Cilicia and Syria and come to his aid. He appeared near the Delta of the Nile where Ptolemy attacked him. In the ensuing battles Ptolemy was killed. He was actually drowned in the Nile, which was said to confer divinity on the deceased person, so Cleopatra ordered a search

for his body and gave him a funeral to prevent another civil war from flaring up in the name of the now divine Ptolemy XIII.

Caesar left Egypt probably in July 47. By this time Cleopatra was strong enough to rule alone, though Caesar had left Roman troops in Egypt, under a loyal officer called Rufio, to assist her. For some time Cleopatra resisted the urges of her entourage to take her very young brother as consort. Sole rule by a woman was abnormal, and in some quarters it was resented; so in the end Cleopatra consented to the wishes of the people, recognising the boy as Ptolemy XIV. This arrangement did not last long, since he died quite soon after Cleopatra returned to Alexandria from Rome in 44. The removal of Ptolemy was extremely convenient for her. She had displayed an unwillingness to share power and suspicion arose that the boy's death was not due to natural causes. Nothing came of the suspicions and there was no disruption to Cleopatra's rule.

Egypt was an ancient kingdom with a ready-made centralised administration when the Greek Ptolemies took over from the Pharaohs. There was a mixed population, especially in Alexandria, where Egyptians, Greeks, Jews, and Romans all pursued their trading or other activities. Alexandria was probably the largest city of the ancient world: a renowned centre of learning and a blend of various cultures. It possessed a double harbour, divided by a man-made causeway connecting the mainland with the famous Pharos Island, from which the even more famous lighthouse took its name.

One of Cleopatra's priorities was to pacify and cultivate the restless population of Alexandria and Egypt who had been almost bled dry by Auletes' efforts to raise the cash to pay the succession of Romans who supported him. Cleopatra did everything she could to alleviate their position while increasing revenues that did not damage their ability to produce food and goods. She impressed the Egyptians by learning their language and fostering their most ancient religious and social customs. None of the Ptolemies had taken so much interest in the ordinary people of Egypt before. When Cleopatra faced Octavian at the end of her life the people of Egypt would have risen up to protect her, but she did not accept their offer. There would have been senseless slaughter and nothing to be gained.

Some of the cities in Egypt had been founded by Greeks as colonies to drain off surplus population or as trading centres. Naucratis was a Greek colony of the seventh century BC and Paraetionium, west of the Nile Delta, was founded by Alexander the Great. In the days when Egypt ruled an Empire, one of the more important ports on the Mediterranean was Ptolemais (later it was named Acre), founded by Ptolemy I Soter. The greatest of all the cities

in Cleopatra's kingdom was Alexandria. Its *raison d'être* was trade, linking the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean with the Mediterranean. Cleopatra encouraged trade into and out of Egypt. The main exports were grain, papyrus, oils from olives and other vegetables, linen, wool, and glass. All trade and all agriculture were controlled, regulated, and taxed by the Ptolemies. The potential wealth of Egypt had been severely depleted by Cleopatra's father, so her most urgent priority was to re-establish trading activities and the flow of goods through Alexandria. For the several commodities that Egypt lacked, such as timber, Cleopatra looked around her with an eye on the produce of her neighbours. Her Pharaonic and Ptolemaic ancestors had controlled several ports in the Mediterranean, but Egypt had steadily lost them. Regaining them was one of her ambitions; but the days when the rulers of Egypt could take control of other ports, harbours, and cities were over. The Romans now had the monopoly on that sort of activity. If she was to reconstitute her trading empire she would need authorisation and assistance from the Romans. The most important Roman in her part of the world at this moment was Mark Antony.

For this reason it may not have been difficult for Dellius to persuade Cleopatra to come to Tarsus to meet Antony. She had been summoned ostensibly to defend herself against the accusation that she had aided and abetted Cassius. The charge was monstrously false, since she had dispatched soldiers from Egypt to help the Caesarian general, Dolabella. Modern scholars, unable to view Cleopatra as anything less than thoroughly devious, have suggested that she did not in fact send any troops, but merely promised them, and claimed to have sent them. Cleopatra had also sent her fleet to help Octavian and Antony, and had been thwarted by the storms which wrecked it. As previously indicated, doubt has been cast on this too. By promising much but doing nothing for either the Caesarians or the Liberators Cleopatra could watch and wait to see who finally won the battles and then make overtures to the victor. It is true that Cleopatra's prime concern was for her country and its survival and for the security of her son, Caesarion, who combined both Rome and Egypt in his ancestry. Some authors have doubted whether Caesar was in fact the father of Caesarion, but if Cleopatra had perpetuated such an enormous fabrication she cannot be blamed for such sentiments since it was her duty to secure the prosperity and freedom of her kingdom. The Romans had fostered designs on Egypt for a long time. It seemed politic to combine Roman and Egyptian interests in the person of her son.

The unanswered and unanswerable question concerns her loyalty

to Caesar. If the assassins of Caesar had been victorious, would she have cooperated with them provided that they recognised Caesarion as Ptolemy XV, ruler of an independent Egypt? Her father, Ptolemy XII Auletes, and then Cleopatra herself had consistently sought recognition as a 'friend and ally of the Roman people', the Roman formula for their arrangements with free allied states. When she had visited Rome as the guest of Julius Caesar she had obtained confirmation of her status as independent ruler of Egypt, allied to Rome, and in order to perpetuate this recognition she had asked Antony to support the claims of Caesarion in the Senate.

According to Suetonius, Antony carried out his promise, and declared at a meeting of the Senate that Caesar had acknowledged Caesarion as his son and that some of Caesar's friends could bear witness to this. In the changed circumstances after the formation of the Triumvirate, Cleopatra had asked the Triumvirs in 42 for further confirmation of her status, and had received recognition for herself and Caesarion as rulers of Egypt. She therefore had compelling reasons to assist Antony and Octavian in their struggle against the Liberators.

If she had sent troops to Dolabella, it was quite beyond her control that these legions had found themselves opposed by many more legions and had made the sensible choice to join Cassius instead of fighting what would most probably have been their last battle. Perhaps the charge that she had helped the murderers of Caesar was made against her to ensure that she rose to the bait, but in that case all that she needed to do was send a haughty reply. If Antony wanted something from her, let him come to Egypt. Since she went instead to Tarsus, sailing from Alexandria on her famous Royal barge, it must be supposed that she wanted something from Antony. Her ambitions were later portrayed by Octavian as nothing short of world domination, but she probably never aimed so high. A secure throne and a secure territory were her foremost concerns, and after that a secure future for her son, Caesarion. She was already educating the child as her successor, and it must be remembered that the fact that Cleopatra advertised him as Caesar's son represented no small threat to Octavian.

Cleopatra may have possessed a lust for power, but it was probably limited to Egypt and whatever lucrative territorial additions she could attach to it, primarily for the revenues they would bring with them. While in Rome as the guest of Caesar she would have met Antony, perhaps on several occasions, and she would have made an estimate of him and his main attributes, his strengths and weaknesses, talents and deficiencies, and most of all his usefulness. She probably

liked him, even though she may have intended to use him when she came to Tarsus. Common sense dictated that it was wise to be on good terms with the Roman Triumvir who commanded armies throughout the east. She may have wished to sound him out before he set foot in Egypt, leaving herself with the option of keeping him at arm's length. After all, the Romans had such a happy knack of ultimately annexing territories that they first entered casually, converting them into provinces before the inhabitants had a chance to think twice. By going to Antony before he came to her, she perhaps hoped to avoid this fate.

The meeting on board Cleopatra's ship, moored on the river Cydnus, has been portrayed in countless different ways. Shakespeare has probably never been bettered, even though film producers have lavished great care and enormous sums on recreating the scene. The truth was probably more fantastic than the fictional scenarios. Cleopatra was determined to make a stupendous impression, and she did possess the wealth and the means to do so. She was clever, shrewd, and determined, seductive rather than physically beautiful. It is said that her most seductive attributes were her mellifluous voice and her conversation, and there is no reason to doubt the legend.

According to Appian, Antony fell for her on the spot, ready to obey her slightest whim, gradually becoming quite oblivious to Rome and all it stood for. This is part of the Augustan repertoire, where Antony is depicted as weak, spineless, bewitched by the evil Queen. It is a clever portrayal because it condemns Antony and provides the excuse for reviling him, but at the same time it excuses him because it presupposes that he was in the grip of a power that was stronger than him, more evil and infinitely more to be feared. Cleopatra was both a foreigner and a woman, one who did not know her place, and therefore an enemy on several counts. By placing on her all the blame for the civil war between Antony and Octavian, the Romans avoided the slur on their own history. They converted Octavian into a saviour and Antony from a Roman general into a pathetic victim, and then they wreaked revenge on the Queen who had caused his downfall. Octavian built up Cleopatra into the arch-enemy of Rome and then defeated her, so he made the Romans grateful for what he had achieved, so grateful in fact that they did not seem to mind that one of the direct results of his achievement was that he took over the whole of Egypt, together with its vastly wealthy Treasury, and kept it as his personal preserve.

Later authors have modified or embellished the legend of Antony and Cleopatra. Romantics cling to the love story. Cynics opt for the theory of bald political expediency and nothing more. Moderates try to blend the two extremes. The bare facts are that Antony dined with

Cleopatra on her fantastic ship at Tarsus, and that after the meeting he went to Alexandria and spent the winter of 41–40 exclusively in her company. Later she bore him twins, a boy and a girl, whom he acknowledged as his own. There is so much room for multiple reinterpretations of these few pieces of solid information that the only recourse is to choose what to believe and then to make the facts fit the theory. Political considerations most certainly did play a large part in what happened. For instance, after Phillipi, if it had been Antony who had gone back to Italy and Octavian who had elected to remain in the east, sooner or later he and Cleopatra would have come face to face over some issue or other. Speculation as to what then might have been the fate of the world would occupy a separate chapter. Octavian was much younger, much more calculating, and much colder than Antony; perhaps it is even true to say that he was more narrowly focused on and at the same time more flexible about the means that he used to achieve his ends. He would have used Cleopatra in a different way, and though he was not averse to sexual affairs, he would probably have kept her firmly in her place as Queen of Egypt. The wealth of the country would have bound him to her, and he would have taken it all in the end; but the final act would probably have constituted merely a footnote in history – and literature, plays, and films would have been the poorer for it.

After the famous visit to Tarsus, Cleopatra returned to Egypt and Antony promised to follow her to Alexandria as soon as he had attended to the administration and settlement of the provinces. There was some trouble in Syria, where the populace was restive because of the heavy tribute imposed by Rome, and there was no lack of aspiring leaders, some of them backed by Parthia, who knew how to exploit the unrest. Appian accuses Antony of creating a terrible mess in Syria by his unprovoked attack on Palmyra. A more compelling reason for unrest was that Antony imposed further tribute. Before he had properly sorted out the problems, so the story goes, he went off to Egypt because he was so besotted with the Queen. The accusations are unlikely to be true, but lack of evidence in Antony's favour makes it impossible to refute them entirely. Antony had been in Syria with Gabinius, so he possessed first-hand knowledge of the province, its problems, and its advantages, and he also knew that it was feasible to invade Egypt from Syria because he had been there, done it, and survived. He would not turn his back on Syria until he had settled affairs there. He placed Decidius Saxa in command, one of the generals who had led his advance guard into Macedonia before the battle of Philippi. He was as trustworthy as any of Antony's lieutenants, if not the best. With Saxa in charge and the province settled Antony went to join Cleopatra for the winter of 41–40.

The Alexandrians liked Antony and his sense of fun. They said that in Rome he wore his tragic mask, but for them he exchanged it for his comic mask. He formed a club called 'The Inimitable Livers' dedicated to pleasures of all kinds. Various anecdotes about his behaviour have passed into legend, but are perhaps not too far from the truth, and reveal something of the man and his relationship with Cleopatra. On a fishing trip where he caught nothing, he sent his slaves under water to attach some newly killed fish to his line and then he hauled them in, pretending to have caught them all at once. The next day Cleopatra sent some of her own slaves under water to attach a salted fish to his line. He landed it, his ruse of the previous day exposed, but taking it in good part, and no doubt quite certain who the culprit was. Such fun and games, if not true in their specific details, are probably representative of Antony's Alexandrian adventures. It may have been politically expedient for the foremost Roman general in the east to woo the Queen of Egypt to ensure her allegiance to Rome, and it may have been shrewd manoeuvring on Cleopatra's part to entertain the Roman Triumvir to keep her country intact, but their relationship certainly went beyond that.

Antony's plans for the east and what he intended to do with the rest of his life are not known for certain. It is assumed by ancient authors and accepted by some modern scholars that Cleopatra drove everything out of his head, so that he had no concerted plans at all. Others maintain that he had a strategic outline that is now lost. With or without a considered policy in mind, it is assumed by both his supporters and his detractors that he must have planned the attack on Parthia immediately after Philippi, because that is what he eventually carried out. Caesar had planned to do it, and Antony was in most respects Caesar's heir in this matter, and there would be eternal glory in carrying Roman arms into the Parthian Empire to avenge the defeat of Crassus. The project was probably always in his mind, but he did not move immediately after Philippi. An expedition of such enormous importance could not be begun lightly on a moment's notice, and the east must be secured before an army could be dispatched beyond the territories under Roman control. But it was only after the near outbreak of civil war between Antony and Octavian, averted by the pact of Brundisium, that Antony began to move against Parthia. When he mobilized it was in response to an attack on Syria, which he sent his general Ventidius Bassus to repel. Until then his interests in the west were as strong as his claims on the east, and it is just possible that he decided to put his Parthian expedition on hold, loitering with intent in Egypt while awaiting the outcome of events in Italy, where Octavian was faced with very difficult problems.

While Antony enjoyed the company of Cleopatra in Alexandria, Octavian's main concerns after Philippi were centred on Italy and the settlement of the time-expired veterans. This was a thankless task because it involved the eviction of existing farmers and an enormous redistribution of lands. Octavian no doubt anticipated trouble but perhaps had not foreseen the tremendous complications that arose. He smoothed the path at first by tact and diplomacy, but then met with active opposition, aroused and fostered by the consul Lucius Antonius and Antony's formidable wife, Fulvia. The other consul was Servilius Isauricus, but, as Dio says, the real consuls for that year were Lucius and Fulvia. The whole episode is strange and probably greatly distorted. Lucius had two potential levers to use against Octavian. First, he espoused the cause of the soldiers of Antony's legions, implying that Octavian had not treated them fairly in the distribution of lands. Octavian cooperated by allowing Antonian representatives to supervise the settlement of Antonian veterans, which removed the difficulty. Thwarted of serious troublemaking in that direction, Lucius changed tactics and began to stir up the displaced farmers who had been successfully farming their lands, probably for many years, and were being turned off in favour of soldiers who had no aptitude for agricultural work. This was already an emotive topic and needed no encouragement. Whichever way Octavian turned he was certain to be wrong-footed. It seemed that Lucius and Fulvia were determined to bring him down.

The soldiers could see clearly that war was looming, and since they would be directly involved in any fighting they tried to avert it by arranging a conference between Lucius and Octavian at Teanum. The two men met as planned and discussed the problems, but without result. Things went from bad to worse. Lucius and Fulvia fled to Praeneste, making great play of their fear of Octavian. When people declare their fear of someone or something it usually means that they will make belligerent efforts to protect themselves, and in turn the object of their fear has no choice except to do the same.

Octavian recruited troops from any and every source, putting his friend Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa in command of them. He recalled his legate Salvidienus Rufus, who was on his way to Spain with six legions, to take over as governor there. He turned back to support Octavian. While Octavian was engaged in this desperate recruitment drive, Lucius marched on Rome, where he made politically correct noises about dismantling the Triumvirate and restoring the Republic. This was an emotive issue as well, but it seems strange that he should promote a policy that would deprive his brother of power. The Senate, encouraged by the promise of a restored Republic, gave Lucius a

legitimate command. He set out to meet Octavian's troops, but Agrippa moved quickly around him and managed to cut him off from Rome. Panicking, Lucius marched north to Perugia, where Octavian lost no time in besieging him. It was a short-lived affair, which ended in February 40 with the town's destruction by fire, perhaps the result of an unfortunate accident. Octavian put to death anyone who had had the remotest connection with the death of Caesar. Lucius was allowed to go free, since he was Antony's brother and it would cause tremendous problems to kill him. He was sent to Spain, ostensibly as governor, but in reality a sort of prisoner, closely watched by Octavian's men.

Antony's part in all this is shrouded in mystery. No one knows for certain whether Lucius and Fulvia had taken it upon themselves to foster Antony's interests without his knowledge, or whether they acted on his instructions. When Lucius talked of restoring the Republic, perhaps he planned to make Antony the senior statesman in this new scheme of things – no longer the anomalous Triumvir but as traditional and lawful consul. Blood ties do not guarantee loyalty, but it is difficult to believe that Lucius was about to undermine his brother and install himself as supreme magistrate. It is even more difficult to believe that it was part of Fulvia's plans to supplant her husband and deprive him of political power. The question is, how much did Antony know of the escalating war? Plutarch exonerates him by insisting that the first news of what was happening came to Antony while he was in Alexandria. Communications in winter are sometimes disrupted, but information from the east was reaching Rome; so it is feasible that Antony knew all about the events in Italy. Dio is certain that Antony had engineered the whole incident, but sat on the fence while it was played out, pretending that he did not know about it. Between these two extremes there are several possible permutations of the facts, without a hope of resolution.

It stretches credulity somewhat to suggest that Antony knew nothing of what was going on in Italy. Despite the difficulties of travelling in winter, friends who wanted to help him and enemies who wanted to discredit him would fall over themselves to inform him. It lends support to the theory that he was so absorbed with Cleopatra that he refused to be bothered with news from Rome, only springing into action when it became clear to him that things were going badly there. During the build up to the war he gave no clear instructions to his governors in the west, Ventidius Bassus and Fufius Calenus in Gaul, Pollio in the Po Valley, and Plancus in the south of Italy. Without firm orders from Antony, they did nothing decisive to help Lucius, but that does not necessarily prove Antony's innocence. The

case for the defence has to prove that he genuinely knew nothing of the activities of his wife and brother, in which circumstance he was a victim of misplaced zeal, exercised unwisely on his behalf. The case for the prosecution has to find evidence that Antony realised what was happening but made no effort to stop it, perhaps hoping to utilise the situation to his own advantage but meanwhile waiting until he was recalled to Rome to sort out the problem. The worst scenario is that it was Antony himself who dreamed up the whole scheme in order to create such upheaval that not only would Octavian be discredited but that Antony would be the one man who could restore order – with consequent sole power and access to all the armed forces of the Roman world which he could then dispose of as he wished. It had been done before, and Antony had witnessed it, and learned from it. Appian was clearly aware of these implications. Through the mouth of Antony's henchman Manius, Appian puts forward one possible interpretation. Manius reminded Fulvia that as long as there was peace in Italy Antony would stay with Cleopatra; but if there was war he would have to return, or would even be recalled by the Senate to take charge of the situation.

Events did not unfold in that way in the end. Antony left Egypt for Athens with problems erupting all around him. At about the same time that Lucius and Fulvia were besieged in Perusia, the Parthians, led by the Roman rebel Labienus, overran Syria early in 40, undoing all that Antony had achieved there. His governor, Decidius Saxa, was killed. Herod, the son of the Idumaeen Antipater, regent of Hyrcanus, fled home to Idumaea, and installed himself at Masada, which he fortified. A Parthian sympathiser, Antigonus, was installed as ruler in his place in Jerusalem.

Though the greater part of the east was in ferment, these problems would have to be dealt with later. Antony could do little to restore the balance, unless he was prepared to ignore events in the west and perhaps suffer a total eclipse there. Octavian had emerged from the siege of Perusia more successful and stronger than ever. The Antonians were in retreat. Civil war seemed inevitable. Antony had to go to Italy to meet Octavian.

Most of Antony's associates and his immediate family had fled after Perusia fell. Ventidius Bassus rounded up the Antonian troops and remained in Italy. Antony would eventually send him the east to re-establish the situation there while he attended in person to the degenerating relationship with Octavian. Fulvia and the Antonian general, Plancus, with about 3,000 troops, travelled to Greece. Plancus had little choice except to join Antony, since his legions had gone over to Octavian. Fulvia was not likely to find sympathy in Rome, so she

hastened to her husband. Her role is not clear. She may have acted independently in what she saw as her husband's best interests, or she may have been his willing agent, acting under his orders. It seems that Antony was not grateful. There may have been an irrevocable split between them on account of the highly emotional issue of Cleopatra. Even if Antony had been totally innocent of any relationship with the Queen, Fulvia would probably have been consumed by justifiable jealousy that her husband chose to spend so much time with another woman. She may have understood that political needs outweighed her personal concerns, but it was evident that Antony had mixed business with pleasure on a grand scale, and his relationship with Cleopatra was not limited to the diplomatic sphere. There may have been furious rows about the matter. At any rate, Antony left Fulvia in Greece, though she was very ill. Perhaps he did not know that it was to be a fatal illness. He never saw her again.

TREATIES AND ALLIANCES, 40–37 BC

Antony could not afford to waste time in arriving in Italy, but he has been accused of callousness in leaving the woman who had worked energetically on his behalf and whom he was generally supposed to love very deeply. The legend fostered by his enemies has perhaps distorted both contemporary and historical perception of his actions. In other circumstances he would perhaps have been praised for stoic heroism in leaving the woman he loved for reasons of state, spurning his own emotional needs and fulfilling his duty like a Roman. If he had survived, vigorous and victorious, or if Octavian had died young, our own perception of Mark Antony might have been very different.

Antony's mother, Julia, had also fled from Italy, and had found refuge with Sextus Pompey, who at some point made friendly overtures to Antony, suggesting an alliance. The exact chronology is not established, but if Julia was confident of a friendly reception it suggests strongly that negotiations had already begun before Perugia fell. Antony replied to Sextus in favourable terms but did not commit himself entirely. He promised that if he could not come to terms with his rivals he would ally with Sextus, but if he succeeded in making peace with Octavian then he would endeavour to reconcile Sextus and his followers with the Senate and people of Rome. This reply was no doubt made for public consumption. It was an honourable and reasonable decision, with just enough of a threat of strong action if negotiations with Octavian failed. Control of a fleet in the Mediterranean was an important consideration, one which Antony could not afford to ignore. Instead of entering an alliance with Sextus, he chose the less inflammatory alliance with Domitius Ahenobarbus, who had kept his fleet together after Pharsalus and had been a free agent ever since. Domitius was a Republican and therefore less repugnant to the Senate than Sextus, especially since he had not chosen to harry the coastal ports and disrupt the food supply as Sextus had done. For Antony he was a politically correct associate and a useful assistant in helping to patrol the seaways. Together Antony and Domitius approached Brundisium, only to find that there were large numbers of Octavian's troops there, and that the town had closed its gates against them.

Antony almost certainly concluded that Octavian had ordered his troops to guard the town and not to let him land there. Grimly he set

about besieging the place, and sent troops to take the nearby town of Sipontum. Octavian's response was to send Agrippa to retake it, and Publius Servilius Rullus to drive Antony off from Brundisium. Antony attacked before Servilius was ready for him, and drove him off instead. He killed many of Servilius' men. After this demonstration of strength, many more of Servilius' soldiers prudently changed sides and joined Antony. The soldiers were the saviours of the situation at this point. They had no desire to fight each other, having for the most part known each other when Caesar was in command of them all. Their loyalties were divided now between the two successors of Caesar, and besides, they were tired of war, especially the kind of war which brought them no lasting glory, no rich booty from foreign lands, and only the prospect of more war, until eventually either one man emerged as sole victor or the antagonists came to some agreement.

The outbreak of another civil war was averted, by diplomacy and compromise, in September 40. Octavian's equestrian and non-military friend, Maecenas, became his spokesman, and Pollio was intermediary for Antony. Also present at the initial talks was Lucius Cocceius Nerva, who was not a partisan of either party. By the time that the negotiations began, the balance had tilted in Octavian's favour. He had ended his marriage to Fulvia's daughter, Clodia. She was very young, and the marriage had probably not been consummated. Now he married Scribonia, the sister of Lucius Scribonius Libo, whose daughter was married to Sextus Pompey. Octavian's intention was transparently obvious. He did not marry for reasons of affection, but for political expedience, as a preliminary to a political alliance with Sextus.

Antony probably felt himself completely upstaged, and may have regretted not having allied with Sextus early in the year, when he had the chance. Octavian was now in a strong bargaining position, and a fortuitous event had made him even stronger. In the summer of 40 Antony's legate in Gaul, Fufius Calenus, had suddenly died. Octavian had travelled to Gaul and immediately taken over Calenus' legions without even the hint of a struggle. He declared that he did so to protect Antony's interests, but of course his own interests were hardly neglected when he took over the troops. It was a tremendous advantage to him to be able to control Gaul and also to be able to call upon so many extra soldiers. His main concern was no doubt to preempt the considerable problems that would have arisen if Calenus' legions had fallen into the hands of someone else, especially if that someone were to pick up the threads that Lucius Antonius and Fulvia had dropped when they were defeated at Perusia in February 40. The inevitability of it all and the supremely fortunate timing of events

from Octavian's point of view probably made Antony think that his luck had deserted him. He acquiesced in the loss of his command of Gaul and of his troops, though he received some compensation by way of extra troops for his later eastern campaign.

The agreement between Antony and Octavian, arranged in the autumn of 40, is known to historians as the Treaty of Brundisium. Its terms redefined the division of the Roman world and determined Antony's future. He had lost control of the territories of the west, and from now on he would focus exclusively on the east. The division between east and west was tidier than the previous arrangements that had been made after Pharsalus. The new dividing line was placed in Illyricum at a hitherto unknown town called Scodra, now in northern Albania. Antony's territories ended with Macedonia, bordering on Illyricum.

Octavian received all the western provinces, including Italy, which was originally designated common recruiting ground for both Triumvirs. Antony lost this potential source of soldiers. Octavian's main tasks were to win back Sicily and Sardinia from Sextus Pompey. Lepidus was left in command of Africa, out of harm's way. Antony was to have greater powers to reorganise and restructure the east. Then he was to deal with the Parthian problem.

While he was in Rome, Antony received a visitor. Herod had left Masada and followed Antony to ask him for his support in reinstating him in control of Judaea. He did not ask to be made ruler, but Herod suggested that if the current Parthian candidate Antigonos could be ousted then perhaps Antony could persuade the Senate to make him regent for Hyrcanus. Antony saw that Herod was clever and as a dependent of Rome – or more realistically of Antony – he would be loyal and would provide protection against the Parthians. The Senate agreed, and Herod obtained more than he had asked for. He was to be king of Judaea, with authorisation to go home to fight for supremacy, with Roman support.

For a short while there seemed to be an optimistic accord between the two Triumvirs, celebrated probably throughout the Roman world; but the evidence for the celebrations is limited. All that is left is a trace element of the response to the Treaty of Brundisium. 'Concord' was the catchphrase of the day. Coins were struck with the legend 'M. ANTON. C. CAESAR IMP.' The abbreviation 'Imp.' stands for *Imperatores*, referring to the two men as military commanders. This and the representation of the goddess Concordia prominently displayed on the coins ensured that people were left in no doubt of two things: the definite presence of armed force, but also the restraining influence of harmonious relations. A monument at

Casinum in Italy celebrated the same Concord. No doubt there were many more such artistic flourishes, now lost.

Despite the optimistic outlook and celebratory adulation, Antony had lost pre-eminence in the west and was never to regain it. Antony's influence waned for the principle reason that after 39 he was permanently absent from Italy and Rome, and was therefore unable to sustain the personal contacts that were necessary for the maintenance of client relationships and for the nurturing of loyalty among the troops and potential recruits. Perhaps Antony did not think of this long-term result when he signed the latest pact with Octavian. The two Triumvirs, ignoring Lepidus, went to Rome in the late autumn to demonstrate their solidarity and to organise the government to their joint satisfaction.

Octavian gave his elder sister Octavia to Antony in marriage to reinforce their renewed alliance. Both Octavia and Antony had been recently bereaved. Fulvia had died in Greece and Octavia's husband Marcellus had died, but too recently for her to marry according to Roman custom. Ten months were supposed to pass before a widow could enter into a new marriage, for obvious reasons of establishing legitimate paternity of any children born of the deceased father. Formalities such as these never stood in the way of men like Octavian and Antony, but since they had to be seen to do things correctly according to the social rules they persuaded the Senate to give the necessary permission for Octavia to remarry before the proper mourning period was over.

Dramatists, novelists, and film-makers usually feel obliged to explore the reaction of Cleopatra to this politically expedient marriage. The Queen may have been as distraught as she is sometimes portrayed, and personal jealousy may have served as a festering irritant between Cleopatra and Antony until almost the end of their lives. There is no evidence to suggest that this was the case, but it is inferred even by the ancient authors, that through her alleged consuming jealousy Cleopatra became more determined to control and manipulate Antony and detach him from Octavia, using all her feminine wiles to keep him by her side, so that he succumbed eventually, losing his dynamism and motivation. In reality, Cleopatra and Antony did not cohabit permanently like a married couple, and Antony was capable of resisting her blandishments when they conflicted with his obligations and duties. He did not agree to all her demands, and they spent long periods of time apart while Antony attended to the administration of the eastern territories, and later to the Parthian war, or hastening to meetings with Octavian in Italy.

It was the alliance with Octavian, rather than Octavia herself as a

female rival for Antony's attention, that Cleopatra had to fear. She may not, at this stage, have been able to foresee the danger that Octavian would represent to Antony and to herself, but politics in Rome were volatile, and Octavian was rapidly becoming all powerful. As the legitimate heir of Caesar, ratified by Roman law, Octavian might one day decide to disinherit the other heir of Caesar, her son Caesarion. Cleopatra would have to trust Antony to do everything in his power to prevent the possible reversal of her own position and that of her son as rulers of Egypt.

For his part Antony entered into the marriage with Octavia with a good grace if not with enthusiasm. Two daughters would be born of this union, and Octavia readily took on Antony's other children, as a virtuous wife ought to do.

After their arrival in Rome, and the celebration of their latest agreement, the Triumvirs agreed that were some sacrifices to be made, harking back to the siege of Perusia and the short-lived squabble between Antony and Octavian. These sacrifices concerned one of each of Octavian's and Antony's lieutenants. Antony's associate Manius had been one of the prime movers in the build-up to the Perusine war, and according to tradition he was the man who advised Fulvia that if there were to be a serious war in Italy then Antony would be recalled and would forget Cleopatra. If he had given this advice, or was deemed to have said something along those lines, then Antony was obliged to demonstrate that he would not tolerate such revolutionary talk which implied that turmoil in Italy was to be stirred up and then used for personal reasons. It was of no consequence whether or not Manius had ever breathed a word, or whether he had expressed an opinion of his own, or whether he had acted under the orders of Antony himself. There could be no hint that Antony had perhaps fostered a personal interest in discrediting Octavian and installing himself as head of the government. What counted was the elimination of suspicion, so that Antony emerged whiter than white. Manius had to go.

More puzzling is the removal of Salvidienus Rufus, who was one of Octavian's closest and long-standing friends. They had been together in Macedonia just before Caesar was murdered, and they had sailed back to Italy together, along with Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa. Antony declared that while he was preparing for the siege of Brundisium, Salvidienus had sent word to him that he was prepared to desert Octavian and join him. The tale may be as simple as that. Perhaps Salvidienus had grown tired of Octavian's single-minded pursuit of supremacy, which entailed the subordination of all his friends to that one purpose. Unlike Agrippa, who was content to play the part of second man in Rome after Octavian and never wavered

from this loyal self-effacement, Salvidienus may have wanted more. He possibly thought he could obtain promotion from Antony. There are many more sinister permutations of the facts, but there is no available information to support any specific theory. Octavian was careful to dispose of Salvidienus by fully documented legal means. The Senate obligingly passed the last decree (*senatus consultum ultimum*) to condemn Salvidienus. He was recalled from Gaul and condemned to death.

The air was now cleared. All the machinery was in place for the Triumvirs to take charge, but the path to power was never smooth. Sextus Pompey had obtained very little from his efforts to negotiate with either of the Triumvirs, who were plainly more concerned with their own immediate needs than they were with his. His immediate response to his lack of positive gain was to attack the coastal towns of Italy yet again and to disrupt the food supply of Rome. He was so successful that famine became a real threat. His strategy worked. The people of Rome rioted. They pelted their erstwhile hero Octavian with stones when he attempted to speak to the mob. Octavian had to be rescued by Antony's troops. The situation could not be tolerated, but neither Octavian nor Antony was prepared to engage in a naval war against such an experienced adversary as Sextus. They possessed neither the ships nor the sailors to go to war at sea, and they had not developed the naval expertise to use them even if they could have produced them at short notice.

Diplomacy was the best way forward. Fortunately Octavian was still married to Scribonia, and was therefore one of Sextus' relations by marriage. Antony suggested that the relationship should be made to work for them and that Octavian's brother-in-law Scribonius Libo should be asked to act as intermediary with Sextus. In negotiation, the Triumvirs had to concede that Sextus would retain control of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica. They were primarily interested in restoring the food supply of Rome so that the rioting would cease and so that their own credibility would be revived. They could do nothing to wrest from Sextus his absolute command of the islands and the predominance it afforded him over the coastal areas of the whole Mediterranean. All that they could achieve was to attempt to undermine any support for Sextus by offering his soldiers the same rewards that they had promised to their own men.

Sextus perhaps understood this when he entertained the two Triumvirs on board his flagship, after they had signed the Treaty of Misenum in the summer of 39. His admiral Menas (sometimes rendered as Menodorus) suggested to him that he could solve his problems all at once if he simply cut the cables and sailed off with his

guests, tipping them overboard somewhere in the open sea. Sextus nobly refused. He would have gained little, and would have merely ostracised himself more than ever. Rome would not automatically accept him because he had disposed of the Triumvirs. He took a chance with the Treaty of Misenum, which restored the status quo and did him no harm. He was made an augur, and was promised the consulship for 33. He was also promised control of the Peloponnese for five years, which was to be handed over to him from the eastern territories under Antony's control. If it had actually come about it would have meant that Sextus had a foot in both camps and a presence in each of the Triumviral territories.

Peace was restored among the Romans for the time being. Octavian had emerged in a much stronger position now that he controlled the western provinces, but there was much to do in Italy. Security still depended on the goodwill of Sextus. Octavian's ability and political shrewdness were not in doubt, but Antony was his equal in political matters and his superior in the military sphere. There was perhaps no need for Antony to worry about the loss of the western provinces and the encroachments made by Octavian. After all, the youth was frail, always ailing, and perhaps might even die; then Antony could come back to Rome to take charge, preferably after a victorious campaign against the Parthians. A victory would bring him considerable kudos and enhance his standing in Rome. It would enable him to reorganise the east and stabilise it, making it secure for the future, with each provincial governor and carefully chosen client ruler owing his or her supremacy to Mark Antony. Such a vast range of wealthy clients in his entourage could do him nothing but good. The avenger of Crassus would enjoy considerable prestige even among those Romans who were not his clients. He would be a potent force, and equal to anything that Octavian could achieve.

After the treaty of Misenum, Antony was all-powerful in the east. His command was sanctioned by the Senate and he had taken the precaution of having all his acts, past and future, ratified before he left the city. Knowing full well by dint of bitter experience how the political climate of Rome could be manipulated, he made every effort to strengthen and legalise his position before he embarked on a distant campaign.

The various states and kingdoms of the east had been wooed and pacified as far as possible. He cultivated some of the rulers of small independent kingdoms and made them his allies, or clients. He granted Roman citizenship to many men as a reward for cooperation or to enable them to join his legions. He and his generals put down troublesome tribesmen or political dissidents. In Macedonia, Asinius

Pollio subdued the small tribes who had been causing trouble along the coasts, and Antony placed troops there to preserve the peace, together with a small number of ships to patrol the coast. In other areas, Antony favoured the ruling aristocracy, offering Roman support in return for a guarantee of internal peace and protection of the borders. Throughout Rome's history, this was the preferred method of controlling tribes and kingdoms which had not been annexed.

Antony spent the winter of 39 in Athens with Octavia, and prepared for the coming Parthian campaign. He did not travel far and wide, but he was not idle during the sojourn in Greece. He dressed as a Greek civilian, freely enjoying the Greek way of life, but his leisurely appearance did not preclude activity. The ancient sources depict the tremendous contrast between his household in winter – peaceful, unhurried, and uncluttered – and the sudden burst of energy in spring, when his house became a military headquarters in all its noisy splendour, with couriers coming and going, queues of officers at the door, and Antony himself dashing about clad in Roman military dress. Appearances can be deceptive, and in this instance have been used to imply that Antony did nothing for a few months and then burst into ill-planned action at the last minute. But he could scarcely have forgotten the east for a single instant while he was in Athens. When he had gone to Italy to confer with Octavian he had left turmoil behind him, which had been brought to a temporary halt or cleared up by his subordinates.

The Parthians had begun to take over vast areas, including Judaea, Syria, and Asia Minor. The instigator of these attacks on Roman and independent eastern territories was Quintus Labienus, the son of Titus, who had been sent by Brutus and Cassius on a mission to the Parthian court and had consequently found himself isolated after the battle of Philippi. Having nowhere to go, he threw in his lot with the Parthians and worked in conjunction with Pacorus to overrun the eastern cities and place them under Parthian control. Labienus advertised his exploits by means of his coinage, displaying his portrait and his newly adopted titles celebrating his military successes. He called himself *Imperator*, and also '*Parthicus*', which to a Roman would normally have meant that he had conquered Parthia; but to Labienus the title signified his change of allegiance from Rome to the camp of Rome's traditional enemy.

Antony had attended to the situation in the east as soon as he was able. During the summer of 39, while he negotiated with Octavian, he sent Ventidius Bassus to restore order in Syria and Asia Minor. This able lieutenant concentrated all his energies on the renegade Labienus, who was soon driven into unseemly flight. He was last

heard of in Cilicia, and then disappeared. Next Ventidius drove the Parthians out of Syria. There will have been a great deal still to do after the fighting was over, but Ventidius' arrangements for consolidation are not recorded in detail. He would need to distribute his troops for the winter to guard routes and strategic points, especially those on the frontiers with Parthia; and most important of all he would need regular and dependable food supplies. He levied tribute from various cities, especially those which had assisted Labienus and the Parthian Pacorus, or at least not put up a very determined resistance to them.

All through the winter of 39 and during the early part of 38 Ventidius will have been in communication with Antony, keeping him informed of events. Once he had reached Athens, Antony could communicate with Ventidius much more easily and much more rapidly than he was able to do while he was in Rome. In Greece Antony will have been able to make a better assessment of what was needed in the east, and he would be better able to direct events from a distance. Indeed, in Athens he was in the best position to keep in touch with both the east and the west. If he expected further trouble from the eastern cities and the Parthians, he would certainly have expected trouble from the west as well. He would need to know what Octavian was doing. After the loss of his Gallic legions and his western provinces to Octavian, it is extremely unlikely that Antony trusted his Triumviral colleague in the slightest degree.

In Rome Octavian was consolidating his position. His marriage to Livia Drusilla in January 38 was a shrewd move on Octavian's part. No matter how much he may have been bowled over by Livia's charms, and however much he may have loved her, his prime motive for marrying his new wife concerned her political connections. Livia Drusilla was the daughter of Marcus Livius Drusus Claudianus. Her background was impeccable and she was well connected, by birth and by her previous marriage, with several noble families of Rome. She would play an important role in bringing over to Octavian powerful allies from the senatorial body, men whose sense of their own dignity might have been affronted by an alliance with an Octavius, but not by an alliance with a scion of the Claudian house.

The marriage had been performed in an impatient hurry, involving manipulation of the laws in order to expedite it. Octavian allowed no difficulties to stand in his way, even though Livia had to be divorced from her first husband, Tiberius Claudius Nero, by whom she already had one son, and was pregnant for the second time. Since the paternity of the second child was not in doubt, and there was no hint of previous relations with Octavian, Livia was duly divorced and

remarried according to Octavian's wishes. Her two children by her previous marriage were the future Emperor Tiberius and his ill-fated younger brother Drusus, who died in Germany in 9 BC after a fall from his horse. Octavian had a daughter, Julia, by Scribonia, divorced on the day of the child's birth, and no doubt hoped for more children by his new wife to ensure that he would have male heirs and could pass on whatever he possessed to reliable successors of his own blood. It was not to be, but his marriage brought him other benefits, and he could perhaps rely on his daughter to provide him with heirs.

News of this marriage alliance will have reached Antony in Athens, and the intentions of Octavian to connect himself to useful people will have been noted. Antony's residence will have witnessed many a coming and going from both halves of the Roman world, but while his dispatches to and from the east were official, as part of his eastern command sanctioned by the Senate, his agents in the west would need to be more circumspect. Octavian would definitely be watching him as closely as he himself watched Octavian, so the leisured life in Athens, in conjugal bliss with Octavian's sister, may have been a deliberate screen to declare to the Roman world in general and to Octavian in particular that their political relationship was progressing smoothly. If such it was, his plan backfired on him because Octavian was able to use it to disseminate a portrait of Antony as an ineffective and even disreputable general and politician. There are few contemporary literary sources that can be said to depict Antony in his true colours, since many have been lost and what survives is a thoroughly reworked record, moulded to suit Octavian's purpose.

Occasionally a fortuitous discovery of an inscription or a fragment of one can serve to set part of the record straight. The famous series of inscriptions from the city of Aphrodisias have been dated to the Triumviral period and throw some light on the state of affairs pertaining in the east. One of the inscriptions refers to a man called Stephanos, who was authorised to act in Antony's name in the east; but the text of the inscription reveals that Octavian also sent instructions to Stephanos directly, without going through Antony's offices first. There is insufficient evidence on which to base any firm or wide-ranging conclusion, but it would seem that there was a potential source of conflict in this system, since it implies that Antony's command of the east was not quite as exclusive as he had been given to understand. It is not known if Antony enjoyed the same rights in the west that Octavian seemed to be able to exercise in the east. To be sure, Antony would have some say in what happened to his clients in the Italian cities, but the case just outlined in the east is

not comparable. Octavian's monarchical tendencies revealed themselves long before he restored the Republic and became Augustus.

In spring 38 Antony began to mobilize. There was much preparatory work to do. The eastern cities and states required some final adjustments and fine-tuning, which could be done successfully only on a basis of sound local knowledge and careful balancing of immediate needs against long-term plans. On the southern shore of the Black Sea, king Darius ruled his people in Antony's favour, and was rewarded with more territory along the coast. King Deiotarus, whom Antony had confirmed as ruler of Galatia, had died in 40 and his successor Amyntas had been confirmed as the new ruler by Antony; but to keep him loyal and properly rewarded Antony enlarged his territory. Herod of Judaea had established himself in power, and though the peace he had achieved was only temporary, he was now able to assist Antony by sending him some troops. In Armenia, Antony stationed his loyal general Canidius Crassus, to ensure that the Parthians could exercise no influence there.

But, once again, before he was able to start on his campaign Antony was delayed by Octavian. It was almost a repeat performance of the events of 40 and 39. The Parthians launched yet another attack on Syria and at the same time Octavian summoned Antony to the west, where the situation in Italy was deteriorating rapidly. Ventidius was again put in charge of operations against the Parthians and Antony sailed to Italy. Octavian was in deep trouble. The peace treaty with Sextus Pompey had lasted barely a year. Very shortly after it had been concluded, Octavian divorced Scribonia, on the very day that she gave birth to his daughter, Julia, his only child. Sextus Pompey took the hint that their relationship was ended, and recommenced his raids on the Italian ports and harbours, disrupting the food supply all over again. In consequence, Octavian was in very bad odour in Rome, though his situation improved somewhat when Sextus' admiral Menas deserted to him, bringing men, money, and ships; more important, it gave him control of Sardinia and Corsica. From then on Sextus Pompey and Octavian were at war. Sextus was the better admiral and strategist, and easily defeated Octavian in two separate encounters. Once again, Octavian needed help from Antony.

Antony wasted valuable time and expense in coming to Brundisium to meet Octavian, only to find that Octavian was not there. The young man may have been ill. He was always ill at crucial moments, though that did not usually prevent him from being at the right place at the right time. This time, however, he did not keep his appointment. Antony went off in a justifiable rage and made his

sentiments known in an open letter to Octavian. He then dashed to Syria, arriving in midsummer. The reliable Ventidius had succeeded in stabilising the situation, so all was not lost. He had brought Pacorus to battle in north-eastern Syria, at Gindarus, and there he had defeated him utterly. The Parthian leader's head was brought to Ventidius as a trophy, and he sent it on a tour of the eastern cities as proof that he had defeated the enemy decisively.

The problems of Judaea were almost resolved too. Herod had been recognised as king of the Idumaeans and Samaritans, but not yet king of Judaea, because Jerusalem was still in the hands of the Parthian favourite Antigonus. As soon as he was able to spare the troops, Ventidius sent a contingent to assist Herod, while he himself marched to Samosata on the right bank of the Euphrates, where Antiochus, king of Commagene, was sheltering Parthian refugees. Ventidius besieged the place. It was quite outside Roman territory, so Ventidius' siege was designed to be construed as an aggressive punitive act to restore Roman supremacy over areas which were not yet incorporated into the Roman world.

Antony arrived at Samosata in late summer and took over from Ventidius, who went back to Rome to hold a well-deserved triumph in November 38. The Triumvirs allowed their legates to celebrate this supreme honour; but later on, when Octavian had gathered all power to himself, the triumphal procession through the streets of Rome became a rarity, a jealously guarded reward, restricted to members of the Imperial family. Yet it was Octavian who fostered the rumour that Antony was jealous of his legate's successes, and that the death of Ventidius some short time later was not altogether a natural occurrence. There was another rumour that Ventidius had accepted bribes from Antiochus, and had delayed the siege of Samosata on purpose, so that he ruined Antony's chances of taking the city. In consequence, it is said that Antony cashiered his former friend, and sent him home in disgrace. This is nonsense, of course. It is a contradiction in terms for a disgraced general to celebrate a triumph. The fact that Ventidius retired after he had reached this apogee perhaps gave rise to the theory that he had been cashiered. Tremendously successful, but unemployed, Ventidius would be an object of curiosity in Rome: if he was half as good as people said he was then why did he not go back to the east where he belonged, at Antony's side? Retirement in the modern sense was not a concept that the Romans understood, but Ventidius was not a young man, and he had had a harsh early life. He was probably tired, perhaps not very healthy. As for the possibility that Ventidius' death was suspicious, Antony had much to gain with Ventidius alive and well and working

for him in Rome, whereas he could not possibly hope to achieve anything by killing him. If he had been jealous, he would certainly not have allowed his friend and reliable general to hold a triumph in the first place; he could have made any one of several excuses to keep him out of the public eye. If he had been really incensed, he did not need to wait until after Ventidius' triumph to dispose of him. It would have been quicker, more economical, and far more credible to arrange a little accident in Syria. None the less, Antony may have had an ulterior motive of a far different kind in sending Ventidius home to make a great display in the city. Octavian had enjoyed very little success in the battles against the renegade Roman Sextus Pompey, but Antony's lieutenant had twice prevailed against that most dangerous of enemies, the Parthians. The celebrations proclaimed Antony as much as Ventidius, and plunged Octavian into the background. It was a war of words and attitudes, posturing and upstaging.

After the departure of Ventidius, the siege of Samosata slipped into impasse quite quickly. Antony negotiated a settlement and returned to Athens for the winter of 38–37. There was nothing more to be done in the east until the next campaigning season started in the spring of 37, though the day-to-day administration of the Roman provinces and the careful watch on the client states continued without a break. Antony's administrative work is unrecorded, but as supreme Roman commander of the whole of the east his delegated officials and the client kings would ultimately report to him. This routine labour would be taken as read in the ancient world, so perhaps nobody bothered to record it for posterity. There were after all greater things at stake during these years, and since it was Octavian who finally emerged perhaps not unscathed but definitely supreme, it is his exploits that fall into the limelight.

The west had not escaped turmoil in 38. Agrippa had won notable victories in Gaul, where there had been serious problems in Aquitania. Octavian had battled on against Sextus Pompey but had gained nothing. In fact, his record was abysmal. Tactfully, Agrippa refused a triumph for his Gallic campaigns, because the contrast between his successes and Octavian's failures would have been too great. As the year was drawing to a close, Antony received a visit from Octavian's friend Maecenas, who had come to ask for further assistance against Sextus Pompey. Since it would have been unwise to march into Parthia with such a potential flashpoint behind him, Antony agreed to meet Octavian to come to some arrangement. Either Sextus must be defeated decisively, or integrated fully into the Triumviral government. The latter was a remote possibility. Neither Antony nor Octavian wanted Sextus as an ally operating freely in the

Mediterranean, and they certainly did not want him in Rome because he could stir up far too much trouble for them there, even though they held the whole Roman world in thrall by military dictatorship. Antony had two choices. He could assist Octavian and hope that this time he would finally defeat Sextus. Or he could take on the war himself. He chose the first option. He got together a fleet of 300 ships, and sailed to Brundisium in spring 37.

For the third time, he found himself in difficulties when he arrived. Brundisium was closed to him and the town authorities would not allow the fleet to sail into the harbour. There is some disagreement in the sources about this event, where perhaps the previous debacles have been confused with this one. At any rate, for some reason Antony sailed on to Tarentum, and that was where Octavian came to meet him. It is said that Octavia – Antony's wife and Octavian's sister – played an important part in reconciling the two men. Perhaps the story is true, especially if Antony had been refused admittance into Brundisium for the third time in succession. His temper would hardly have been amiable, nor would Octavian have been in a good mood because he was forced to ask Antony for help in a war that he had been trying to win for some time.

The agreement made at Tarentum in 37 embraced more than just the immediate needs of the two Triumvirs. Octavian was to receive 120 ships from Antony to replace those that had been destroyed by Sextus, or wrecked in storms. These Antony parted with straight away. The deal was supposed to benefit Antony too. In his Parthian campaign he would have more need for soldiers than ships and sailors, so Octavian agreed to give him 20,000 men. One may be permitted to wonder if Antony really believed that he would ever receive them, or if Octavian ever intended to do more than sign the document that promised the men to Antony. He never relinquished them all. What Antony finally received was a pathetic contribution, too little, too late.

After the exchange of ships and men had been agreed, the Triumvirs turned to their joint needs. Technically, they held no legal power because the Triumvirate had been set up for a fixed term of five years in 43, which meant that at the end of 38 it had run its term. For the time being it was highly unlikely that either of them would be challenged and no one had yet begun to shout the name of Lepidus as a candidate for sole government. Antony and Octavian were still in power because they held most of the armed forces of the Roman world; and, besides, they were the two men most able to put an end to the depredations of Sextus Pompey and thus restore freedom of the seas and the food supply of Rome. The Roman mob for the most part had enough sense not to bite the hands that fed them, and the Senate

was muzzled after the savage proscriptions of 43. But there remained the problem of political correctness. Neither Antony nor Octavian could hope to continue on this nebulous basis for too long. At the present time of emergencies and disasters there was not much danger of legal wrangling, but a close examination of the Triumvirate would reveal so many loopholes that the Triumvirs would not risk having their powers placed under scrutiny. Questions as to whether there was a fixed legal term or whether the Triumvirate was open-ended until the Triumvirs resigned were probably being asked in many a private household, but no one had asked them in the Senate, and probably never would. But it was a risk that could not be allowed. Being in a hurry, Antony and Octavian did not bother with too many time-consuming formalities. They renewed their powers for another five years, and shortly afterwards the position was legalised by a law of the people of Rome. Theoretically the new terminal date was to be the end of 33, but probably neither of the Triumvirs lost any sleep over that particular dilemma. Their present predicament probably absorbed their whole attention. Octavian and Agrippa had to build up a new fleet, train their crews, and confront Sextus Pompey. Antony had to confront the Parthians. Neither task was a sinecure.

THE PARTHIAN CAMPAIGN, 37–35 BC

The negotiations at Tarentum were prolonged until the late summer or early autumn, which meant that there was no prospect of campaigning in the east during the rest of that year. The campaign was therefore relegated to 36. During the intervening months, there would be plenty of time for Antony to make an assessment of where he stood. Octavian had gone from strength to strength, and had declared for all to see the direction that he was following.

Fortunately, Octavian's mastery of the western half of the Roman world was not yet as secure as he would have liked it to be. He still had to try to resolve the problem of Sextus Pompey's raids and his strangulation of the sea lanes and harbours, and there was every possibility that he would find the task overwhelming. If he failed, and particularly if he was killed, Antony could be called upon to fight the battles on his behalf; but that would involve relinquishing direct control of the east for an unspecified length of time. He could govern the provinces via his legates, as he had previously governed Gaul, but Antony seemed uninterested in trying to regain control of the west. His readiness to help Octavian on previous occasions, and especially his willingness to give up his ships, suggests that he was content with his command of the east, and harboured no ambitions to control the western half of the Roman world, or to take over the whole of it.

On the other hand, whatever the outcome of Octavian's struggle with Sextus Pompey, by this time Antony would be fully aware that Italy and the west were closed to him unless he asserted himself. Despite his marriage to Octavia, Antony was not exactly a close associate and trusted friend of Octavian, and would have to work very hard to remain one step ahead. It did not matter that Antony's agents were working for him in Rome. Nor did it count for much that he could look forward to future consulships and high offices. His absence from Italy had gradually given the advantage to Octavian, who was continually in the public eye, and continually exploited to the utmost every political expedient that he could muster to advertise himself. Octavian portrayed himself in the best possible light, and he did not do so in a vacuum. It was so much more pertinent to present himself as the perfect contrast to Antony, who was to provide him, as time went on, with an ideal antithesis.

Octavian deliberately chose to adopt sober Roman attitudes and behaviour, and sober gods to promote his cause, such as Apollo and Mars. Antony was, and had always been, far from sober himself, and he adopted far from sober gods such as Dionysus and Hercules to promote his cause. Octavian referred to ancient Roman custom all the time. Antony espoused eastern rather than Roman customs. It did not matter that he did so as a political expedient to govern the eastern territories on terms with which they would be familiar. As an additional insurance policy for his glorious future, Octavian began to imbue all his actions with glory, not for himself but for the people of Rome, whose saviour he was determined to become.

The contrast with Antony played into his hands at every turn. Even as late as 37 Antony was the strongest of the Triumvirs: his military reputation was unsullied and he had done nothing to incense the people against him. He had not descended on Italy to put himself at the head of the state. He had assisted Octavian whenever he was asked to do so, and he was preparing for an eastern campaign which promised to bring wealth, booty, and vengeance for Rome. But there were already several loopholes for Octavian to exploit. His name was linked with the dangerous and scheming Queen of Egypt. The rot had already set in as far as the Romans were concerned, and though it may have been subtle at first, easily remedied if only Antony could achieve a great victory against the Parthians, the fact that all these characteristics were deeply embedded and of long duration made it so much easier for Octavian to discredit him properly when the time came.

Departing from his normal custom of overwintering in Athens, Antony chose to spend the winter of 37–36 in Antioch in Syria, where he could gather information, issue orders more rapidly, and make preparations for the next spring. He left his family in Italy, preferring not to expose them to the dangers of the war zone. There was every excuse, since Octavia and Antony already had an infant daughter, the elder Antonia born in 39, and Octavia was pregnant for the second time; this child would be another daughter, Antonia *minor*, to distinguish her from her elder sister. Octavia had four children in her brood, since she had taken under her wing Antony's two sons by Fulvia, Marcus Antonius Antyllus and Iullus Antonius. In order to keep them safe, and perhaps to remind the people of Rome that he was still a force to be reckoned with, Antony insisted that the whole family should wait for him in Rome.

Once he was free of his immediate family, he lost no time in inviting Cleopatra to Antioch to stay there with him until the Parthian campaign began. She brought with her his twins born in 40,

Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene, who were now about three or four years old, and named for the sun (Helios) and moon (Selene). The names were not given to the children as the result of a whim. They were meant to convey regal if not imperial authority. Antony acknowledged paternity of these two children.

It is possible that Antony married Cleopatra according to Egyptian rites, while they were resident in Antioch. The date and even the existence of any form of marriage between Antony and Cleopatra are much disputed, and several possible permutations have been proposed. Perhaps there was some form of ceremony at some time, either in Antioch or in Egypt, which could be construed as a marriage by eastern witnesses. Or it may have been a symbolic marriage, readily compared with marriages of the gods, between Osiris and Isis, or Dionysus and Aphrodite, which appealed to both Egyptian and Greek elements of the east. Alternatively there may have been no ceremony at all, but only an ongoing relationship, in which neither party cared about marriage as such. Whatever the truth of the affair, Octavian was able to make it seem that Antony had married Cleopatra illegally, since marriage with foreigners was forbidden by Roman law. An easterner could accept a marriage between peoples of different races and backgrounds more readily than a Roman, so when Antony and Cleopatra posed as Osiris and Isis, and named their children for the sun and moon, the display was double-edged; in the east Antony's actions in playing the divinity and acknowledging his two children by Cleopatra would strengthen their joint authority, but in Rome it condemned him. Perhaps he knew what the result would be, but by now he did not care. It is possible to construe his behaviour in 37 as evidence that he had reached an irrevocable turning point, and had decided that if his future lay exclusively in the east then he may as well eschew half measures. He may have needed Egyptian wealth and support for his Parthian campaign, and protection of the southern borders while he was on campaign, but he could have acquired all that without inviting the Queen to Antioch for the winter, and he certainly did not need to take her to bed and produce another child, who was born in the following year and named Ptolemy Philadelphus.

The relationship between Antony and Cleopatra was by this time much more than a political one, though politics were never forgotten for long. Cleopatra was not simply a personal guest, brought to Antioch for Antony's amusement for the months before he went to war. The Queen of Egypt was granted lucrative territories to add to her already wealthy domains. Caesar had granted her the rule of Cyprus, and in addition she ruled Crete, Cyrene and Cilicia, Phoenicia, and Nabataean Arabia. Most of these areas yielded profitable

resources for Egypt, or possessed harbours and ports which would facilitate trade. She was also given the balsam groves of Jericho, strictly part of the kingdom that Herod was winning back for himself. As a businesswoman, Cleopatra was shrewd and ruthless, perhaps without equal in the ancient world, though there were probably many more women like her whose exploits have gone unrecorded. Herod was in no position to argue; he had only just asserted his authority over Judaea, having successfully disposed of the Parthian sympathiser Antigonus. Cleopatra leased the balsam groves back to him at a vast annual rent.

As ruler of a much impoverished Egypt, Cleopatra can hardly be blamed for trying to increase the wealth of her country. For many years, before the reign of her father, Ptolemy Auletes, Egyptian wealth had been siphoned off to Rome. Leading Romans from the time of Sulla onwards had shored up Ptolemaic rulers by means of loans. Such a process could not continue forever, and when Caesar set Cleopatra on the Egyptian throne the coffers were nearly empty and the people oppressed by taxes. It was her duty as a ruler to reverse the situation. Her aim was to reconstitute the empire that Ptolemy II had ruled, and her acquisitions were not made in the name of megalomania. All were profitable, yielding commodities that Egypt lacked, such as timber, or brought in revenue via trading activities.

The extended territories of Egypt mirrored the arrangements that Antony had made for other allied rulers. It was not simply favouritism for his mistress, as it was described in Rome, but part of his plans for the settlement of the eastern provinces and kingdoms. The rulers chosen and supported by Antony all benefited from their alliances with Rome, and all proved reliable after his death. Octavian did not have to install new rulers or adjust boundaries to keep the east peaceful. Amyntas succeeded Deiotarus, the ruler of Galatia, in 39. He was made ruler of Pisidia and Phrygia, and in 36 Antony granted to Amyntas the old kingdom of Galatia, together with Lycaonia and Pamphylia. Polemo ruled the kingdom of Pontus, parts of which had been carved up by Pompey the Great after his eastern campaigns and given to various different rulers and the remainder annexed as a Roman province. Antony restored most of this annexed territory to native rulers, and enlarged Polemo's territory, also granting him control of Lesser Armenia, probably in 37, or at least just before he embarked on the Parthina campaign. In 36 Antony installed Archelaus as ruler of Cappadocia. After Antony's death, Octavian confirmed him in his kingdom and added more territory to his realm.

Antony had consistently supported Herod as king of Judaea, and he had reorganised the other eastern kingdoms to the advantage of

Rome and naturally to his own satisfaction. The men he chose would serve Rome well, wisely changing sides when it was evident that Octavian was going to win the war and Antony was to be the loser. Treachery to Antony does not enter the picture; he would be the first to agree that when all else was lost, survival of the people and kingdom ought to be the first concern of any king. He reorganised some boundaries and refashioned some of the lesser kingdoms, choosing men whom he trusted for the larger territories. Before he embarked on his Parthian war, Antony ensured that he was surrounded by capable rulers who were as reliable as any man could be in the circumstances.

There remained the kingdoms outside his immediate control. During the period of preparation for the war, Antony sent Canidius Crassus to Armenia, to secure the territory for Rome. Whichever route that Antony chose to attack Parthia, it was vital to neutralise this kingdom before marching, so that the Roman army would not be faced with the possibility of an attack on their rear while they marched, or being cut off from their retreat. Canidius defeated Artavasdes, who obligingly severed his long-standing alliance with Parthia, and became the ally of Rome. Roman troops remained in the territory to ensure the loyalty of Artavasdes and his people. But the victory brought further complications, since it rendered the neighbouring kingdom of Media nervous and hostile to Rome. It was well nigh impossible to be the friend and ally of both these mutually inimical kingdoms of Armenia and Media, so a choice had to be made between them. The king of Media, also called Artavasdes, strengthened his alliance with Parthia, but that was only to be expected. Military conquest was the only solution, but that would be left until the following year. Satisfied with the results in Armenia, Canidius went on to campaign against the peoples of the Caucasus. The first stage of the Parthian project was in operation, and so far it looked like standard Roman procedure for protecting the rear and flank of their invading army.

The timing of the Parthian war was only slightly faulty. If Antony could have started a year earlier he might have caught the enemy off guard. There had been a revolution in the ruling house of Parthia, which had lasting consequences. The Parthian king Orodes was supposedly devastated by the death of his son Pacorus, who had lost his life in combat with Ventidius' army. Towards the end of 38 or early in 37 Orodes abdicated in favour of Phraates, one of his many other sons. Shortly afterwards, Orodes died, or perhaps more likely he was killed on the orders of Phraates. All the many sons of Orodes and any other close relatives who might have posed a threat to Phraates

also disappeared, including Phraates' own son. The eradication of opposition was not limited to the ruling house. Phraates went on to weed out suspect members of the nobility as well, much as the Triumvirs had rooted out opposition in Rome. Such ruthlessness engendered opposition from the surviving Parthian nobility, and the ensuing turmoil would have provided a fortuitous opportunity for Antony to attack. But the meeting with Octavian took greater priority so by the time that Antony invaded in 36 Phraates had consolidated his position, and the comparative weakness of the Parthian high command could not be exploited to the full.

Antony's choice of Antioch as his winter quarters made it quite clear that his next project would be to invade Parthia. There was no question of renouncing the idea and settling down in the east to consolidate and bring it under Roman control. The Parthians and the Romans would always be mutually suspicious of and hostile to each other. Throughout the history of the Roman Empire the Romans were more often than not the aggressors, attacking Parthia without too much provocation. In Antony's case, the provocation had more recently been activated by the Parthians. With the support of Labienus, the Parthians under Pacorus had attacked Syria, where their raids were most often carried out. Before that, the army of Crassus had been defeated and Roman standards and many prisoners had been carried off. It was imperative for Antony, the commander of the eastern provinces and ally of the client kingdoms, to take some action to repair the damage and strike at the enemy. Rulers in the ancient world, and especially in the east, were only as strong as their own right arm, and weakness was the signal for kings and satraps to change their loyalties, either because they needed protection or because they wanted to be on the winning side.

The eyes of many people in both the Roman and the Parthian worlds would be upon Antony as he made his preparations. It was probably not his intention to keep the projected invasion secret, which would have been almost impossible to achieve. At some point he would have to assemble troops and supplies and muster them somewhere near the border. Parthian spies and sympathisers would observe and report on his activities. Instead of preparing with the greatest secrecy, Antony made a noise about the forthcoming campaign. He sent an embassy to Phraates to ask for the return of the Roman standards lost at Carrhae. Presumably he did not expect that the request would be answered by the meek delivery of a bundle of Roman eagles accompanied by a note saying sorry. It was a declaration of intent, outlining the purpose of the coming war.

The literary references to Antony's request for the return of the

eagles would have deep significance for Augustan and later audiences, who would know perfectly well that where Antony had failed Augustus succeeded. In his early campaigns in Illyricum, before he was known as Augustus, Octavian retrieved the standards lost by Gabinius in the 40s. Then, as Augustus, without recourse to arms and without shedding any more Roman blood he achieved the impossible. In 20, after a tense interlude of negotiating, the standards were returned to Rome by the Parthians. The contrast between Antony's military expedition and Augustus' diplomatic coup in 20 would render Antony that much more pathetic: all bluster, armed force, and failure as against Augustus' cool, rational patience. The point is worth labouring, because Augustus laboured it himself. Literary references to the achievement leave no doubt as to its importance, and artistic representations on coins and statues were used to impress contemporaries and keep the tradition alive for posterity. The scenes depicted on the cuirass of the statue of Augustus from Prima Porta are all concerned with this event and show the Parthian king humbled before the Roman Emperor. Where Antony could not prevail, Augustus triumphed.

With this in mind, it is worth enquiring whether any of the stories of Antony's Parthian expedition are entirely true. They may have been shaped and pruned to represent a greater fiasco than existed in reality. The few details derived from the ancient authors must be treated with caution. One of Antony's officers, Quintus Dellius, wrote an account of this period and covered the Parthian war, in which he took part, and it is more than probable that this work was used by Plutarch in compiling his biography. Dellius was not likely to fill his work with untruths, but when it was clear just before the battle of Actium that Antony was losing the war, Dellius eventually deserted and went over to Octavian. If his account was written after his defection, it may well have contained sentiments that would discredit Antony and would be pleasing to Octavian. Dellius certainly criticised Cleopatra, and though disaffection among Antony's officers had set in as Cleopatra took a leading part in the war, and though Dellius was perfectly capable of thinking for himself, it has to be admitted that this can be construed as toeing the party line.

Accompanied by Cleopatra as far as Zeugma, Antony assembled his troops there. He had placed his friend and lieutenant Gaius Sosius in command of Syria, and raised extra troops. His army was large but not wholly Roman. Besides recruiting allied contingents who would fight under their own rulers or officers, Antony had resorted to Pompey's methods of raising legionaries. In strict adherence to the law, legionaries were supposed to be Roman citizens, but Antony

could no longer recruit in Italy, and the 20,000 men promised by Octavian had not yet appeared. In the absence of Romans, Pompey had solved the same problem by bestowing citizenship on a variety of natives and forming them into legionaries. There were Greeks and many easterners in Antony's army, whose loyalties were to their commander who paid them rather than to the ideology of Rome itself. It is significant that Antony was able to inspire them and retain their obedience throughout his campaign.

Zeugma lay on the north-eastern border of Syria, and the Roman mobilization served to draw the Parthian army into the plains of Mesopotamia to await the invasion. It was all very plausible, because to the east of Zeugma lay Carrhae, where Crassus had met defeat, so it would seem likely that the Romans were about to launch a grand campaign to avenge Crassus in the very place where he had died. But Antony did not enter Mesopotamia from Syria. Instead he marched north to Samosata and then by way of Armenia, which was sufficiently subdued by the enforced alliance to allow the passage of the Roman army. It could be argued that Antony, vacillating, had changed his mind about how to conduct the campaign, or that he assembled his army facing the plains as part of a ruse to bring the Parthians to meet him and then move off leaving them uncertain as to what he intended, to gain a little time before they followed him.

Antony intended to subdue Media, the neighbouring state of Armenia, before turning towards Parthia itself. The first task was therefore to take the Median capital Phraaspa. The exact name of the city is not established. It is sometimes rendered as Phraapa, and Plutarch calls it Phraata. Its location is not known for certain. It may have been situated south-east of Lake Urmia.

Antony arrived there, despite the extremely long journey, before the Parthians did. It is said that Antony made it known that he was following a plan that Caesar had outlined long before. It is not even certain that Caesar had made any plans, and it could be said that it was highly unlikely that he had revealed them to anyone, but there would have been plenty of opportunity for Antony to discuss with Caesar where Crassus had gone wrong, in risking a pitched battle in an open plain, against an enemy who excelled in that style of combat, using their cavalry to surround the Romans. But the march northwards in an elaborate ruse to lure the enemy to a false battle ground, followed by a rapid dash to come down behind the Parthians, was a typically Caesarian manoeuvre, risking all on speed and expertise. It might have succeeded. But it did not.

Antony dashed to Phraaspa with most of his troops and his cavalry on the mountain route, leaving his siege train to lumber on

behind him on more accessible roads. It was protected by two legions under Oppius Statianus, together with some Pontic troops under their king Polemo, and contingents of Armenian troops recruited from Artavasdes. The convoy was set upon by a Parthian army. The Armenians fled, Polemo was captured, but ransomed later, and Statianus and most of the legionaries were killed. Antony's siege train was destroyed. In itself it did not necessarily presage disaster. The city could be invested by fortifications all around it and some siege engines could be built, though timber was scarce. If Antony could reduce Phraaspa very quickly he would be able to spend the winter there and go on to attack Parthia itself in the following year. It would make sense to reduce Media first, garrison it securely, and then make for the Parthian capital of Ecbatana. Events did not turn out that way, whatever Antony had planned, because Phraaspa did not fall to him. The Parthians arrived, and lingered just out of reach, harassing Antony's army, but not giving battle. Despite all Antony's attempts to bring them to battle, and despite his considerable successes against the Parthian attacks on his besieging army, final victory eluded him.

When he was forced to the realisation that he had failed, he had to begin to think of retreat. With winter approaching, he could not continue the siege without doing irreparable harm to his army. If he could not inflict a rapid and decisive defeat on the Parthian army, it was very likely that his troops would be picked off little by little over the winter. The allies who marched confidently with him at the outset of the campaign would have no reason to remain with him, and could prove his undoing. He had gambled and lost, and now he had to retreat.

The Parthians for their part were also worried that their allies might desert them and go home to gather their crops if the siege went on too long. So Phraates had every reason to encourage Antony to retreat. He offered a truce. Antony asked for the return of the Roman standards. Phraates refused and destroyed some of Antony's siege works. The Parthians offered a safe passage back to Armenia. If Antony believed that, he deserved no credit at all.

Plutarch describes how Antony had no heart for a speech to the soldiers announcing his decision, so he asked Domitius Ahenobarbus to make one. The soldiers for the most part understood why he had done so, and followed him loyally. As in any famous retreat, there were desperate heroics and tragedies. The Armenian contingents who were still with Antony hurried off towards home. Antony was left with a depleted army, retreating over ground that had already been stripped of supplies, with the winter already advanced. He had been in this desperate position before when he left Mutina to march into Gaul,

and in these difficult circumstances he once again showed himself capable, brave, and resourceful. He used every stratagem that he had learned, so that Plutarch's account reads like a military manual on what to do when retreating, hard pressed by the enemy, and in difficult terrain. Discipline had to be enforced when the Romans wavered, so five days into the retreat Antony decimated cowardly troops and put the survivors on punishment rations of barley instead of wheat. Unfortunately, Plutarch does not enlighten his readers on where the supplies were obtained. At this point food was perhaps not in quite such short supply; later, the position would become desperate, so that the men ate roots of all descriptions, including one which caused madness. It has been suggested that the roots may have been contaminated with a fungus that produced symptoms similar to those derived from LSD. The victims started to turn over stones as though they had no other purpose in life, and then vomited and died. The antidote to the poisonous roots was said to be wine, but the Romans had long since run out of wine.

Training and expertise still existed in Antony's army so that he was able to march in square formation around the all-important supplies, escorted by clouds of scouts and flanked by skirmishers. Even so, he lost many men, especially during an attack on the rearguard when, according to Plutarch, Antony lost 3,000 dead and 5,000 wounded. It seems that the Parthians did not follow up this attack. According to Plutarch, at a certain river or stream, the location of which is unknown, the Parthians came to a halt, unwilling to cross into the territory beyond. The story sounds dubious, since it would have been in Phraates' interests to annihilate the Romans.

It is said that the remnants of Antony's army reached Armenia in twenty-seven days, but even then the problems were not over. Although he was urged by the soldiers to take revenge on Artavasdes for deserting them, Antony was not capable of making any demonstration of strength in Armenia, so he pretended that the alliance was still in force and pressed on. However fiercely his troops would have fought for him if he embarked on a campaign for revenge there was nothing to be gained from engaging in another war at the moment. But Antony would not forget.

It was time to act decisively to save what he could of his army. Domitius Ahenobarbus and Canidius were charged with bringing it out of the snows of Armenia, while Antony went on ahead to make arrangements for supplies of food and clothing. He made for the coast of Syria, and made camp near to the sea. The location is disputed, but it was probably between Berytus and Sidon, though there is no proof. He had sent messages to Cleopatra to bring food, clothing, and money.

Loyally, she set sail, risking a winter voyage, bringing with her the necessary supplies. It was probably in January 35 that she arrived there. While he waited for her, Antony took heavily to drink – more so than usual, if the reports are correct. Having nothing much to do, he kept leaping up from half-eaten meals to go outside, gazing wistfully seawards, hoping that her ships would appear on the horizon. It must have been a relief when they did. Antony set about distributing money, food, and clothing to his soldiers. It is not known where he quartered them for the winter, but after doing all that he could for their comfort, he went back with Cleopatra to Alexandria.

It was much more of a relief that the Parthian army did not follow him to Syria. He was not yet in a position to repel an invasion. Fortunately for Antony the dissensions of the Parthian royal house prevented Phraates from mounting an aggressive campaign. Phraates was further restricted by the defection of Media. Following Antony's retreat, Phraates and Artavasdes of Media had quarrelled about the distribution of the Roman booty after Antony had withdrawn. The Median Artavasdes, recently Antony's enemy, made friendly overtures to him in 35, proposing dynastic marriage ties and releasing the captive Polemo, king of Pontus. It was evident that there was more to the quarrel than the division of the spoils of war, and that here was an opportunity to exploit the differences of opinion to attack Parthia again. Instead of having to fight for and win a base Antony could march into Media and pick up where he left off in winter 36. If he had grasped the opportunity there and then he might have been able to achieve his aims, humble Parthia, retrieve the lost Roman standards, return them to Rome triumphant, and perhaps regain some of his lost supremacy in the west. But he could not reform his battle groups and begin again so early after the enervating retreat; and, besides, there was another problem that he had to attend to first.

News reached Antony while he was in Syria that Octavian and Agrippa had finally defeated Sextus Pompey at the battle of Naulochus in early September 36. Agrippa had prepared thoroughly, building new ships to add to the depleted fleet and training the crews for months on a lake, artificially deepened for the purpose, until they were as practised and expert as Sextus' sailors. The naval battle had been won, and it gave control of Sicily, at last, to Octavian. It was an important province, because it yielded much of the corn that fed Rome. At this stage the fabled corn supplies of Egypt were not under direct Roman control.

Sicily had not fallen into Octavian's hands without a struggle, however. The forgotten Triumvir Lepidus had brought troops from Africa to help Octavian in the final land battles, and at their

conclusion he had decided to assert himself, declaring Sicily his province and trying to hold it by force. His attempted resistance crumbled instantaneously. The result was that Octavian also gained control of Africa, another lucrative corn-producing area. Lepidus was sent back to Italy and kept under surveillance for the rest of his life – for the next twenty four years in fact. He was allowed to retain his priestly office as Pontifex Maximus, and when he died in 12 BC Augustus, as he then was, quietly assumed the priesthood for himself. Patience was one of Octavian's enduring talents.

Antony perhaps did not mourn for the misfortunes of Lepidus, but he could not fail to take note of the significance of Octavian's steady encroachment of power. Now that Sextus Pompey had been defeated very little stood in Octavian's path to sole power in Rome, save for the irritating fact that Sextus had escaped after the battle of Naulochus and was still at large. He fled to the east, hoping for an alliance with Antony, which might have been arranged but for the fact that when he thought Antony had been defeated and possibly killed Sextus did not wait to find out if the rumours were true but began to intrigue with the Parthians. In all his dealings with Antony from then onwards Sextus showed himself to be thoroughly untrustworthy. Antony tried to be diplomatic, sending his general Titius against Sextus with orders to spare him if he submitted. The final encounter took place in Bithynia. Sextus began to recruit an army after landing at Nicomedia, drawing down on his own head the charge of outlawry. It was not clear what exactly he wanted. Perhaps he did not know what it was himself. Some of Sextus' officers left him and joined Titius, intending to submit to Antony. Even then Sextus hoped to wriggle out of his predicament. He promised to negotiate, but only with Titius' colleague Furnius, and king Amyntas of Galatia, but not with Titius himself. While this was in the offing, Sextus then tried to burn some of Titius' fleet. His was a hopeless case, because he was, to use an anachronistic expression, a loose cannon. In the end Amyntas captured him and, not wishing to compromise himself, handed the renegade over to Titius, who executed him. Thus the last surviving son of Pompey the Great met his end. It was the only logical conclusion, so perhaps it does not really matter whether it was Titius who took the law into his own hands or whether the final order came from Plancus, Antony's legate commanding Asia Minor and Syria.

The necessity of fighting a minor civil war, and perhaps sheer exhaustion, prevented Antony from taking any further action against Parthia in 35. He did not intend to remain entirely inactive, since he offered help to Octavian, who began a campaign against the tribes of Illyricum in that same year. More than ever, Octavian needed military

renown and experience if he was ever to have full standing in Rome. Until now his victories had always depended on someone else: Antony at Philippi and latterly Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa in Gaul and at Naulochus. As Caesar's son, he wanted to show that he too could wage successful wars and bring glory to Rome. More important still was the need for a legitimate excuse to keep an army together under his personal command. After his victory at Naulochus and the defeat and disgrace of Lepidus, he had more than forty legions at his disposal, far too many for the tasks in hand. He settled many of the veterans in the provinces, but he still could not afford to disband all the troops.

Antony had more than one reason to command a large army because without troops he could not administer and defend the eastern provinces; but once Sextus Pompey and Lepidus had been eliminated Octavian could reasonably and legitimately command only the armies in Gaul and Spain. If a future conflict with either Antony or even with the Senate were to develop, Octavian required more immediate access to troops than this would give him. He needed a legitimate war, not too far from Rome, in which he could command troops. He chose to conduct his campaigns in Illyricum, which were not strictly necessary for Rome's safety, and brought very little tribute into the coffers. But they did bring Octavian some credit, which he was quick to seize upon and enlarge. Antony's so-called Parthian victory was beginning to tarnish a little in the light of Octavian's more tangible successes.

This was the time when Antony should have gone to Rome to promote himself, while Octavian was engaged on his campaigns in Illyricum. He either chose not to go, or did not see the necessity of doing so. He set off from Alexandria to attend to the provinces; but when his wife Octavia came to Athens with money, extra troops, and supplies from her brother Octavian, Antony did not go to meet her but turned back to Alexandria, directing Octavia to send on the troops and to go back to Rome. His reasons are obscure, since he must have realised that this was a grave insult to a virtuous woman who had never done him any harm. Octavia remained in Athens perhaps until the summer of 35. Then, before it became unsafe to sail, she dutifully returned to Rome, where she remained in Antony's house looking after his children. She gained more credit by acting correctly and doing nothing than she would have done if she had wailed and protested. Antony's son, Marcus Antonius Antyllus, went to join his father in Alexandria, not necessarily as a result of any dispute with his stepmother, though there may have been some definite parting of the ways.

Antony must have known that Octavian would eventually use his

churlish behaviour against him, and perhaps intended to demonstrate to his colleague that he was now following an independent course. The ancient authors concluded that Antony was so besotted with Cleopatra that he no longer cared. The Queen of Egypt is blamed for the downfall of a once mighty Roman general, using her wiles to enslave him each time he threatened to leave her. Plutarch even includes a ridiculous tale about her deliberate play-acting to convince him that she was madly in love with him – greeting him with joy each time he appeared and not quite controlling her tears when he was absent.

Not knowing what was in Antony's mind, it is difficult to explain why he acted as he did. He is open to charges of stupidity, naivety, arrogance, misplaced confidence in his own abilities, or even madness. The incontrovertible fact is that when he repudiated Octavia so decisively in 35 he had burnt his boats, because he had provided yet more reason to his brother-in-law Octavian to break with him. It is not certain how soon Octavian latched onto the repudiation of his sister as part of the propaganda war against Antony, but it would have been better to strike while the iron was hot, as it were, or before the populace of Rome and Italy could forget this latest scandal and replace it with some other salacious gossip. Octavian and Antony had been attacking each other with words and accusations ever since the assassination of Caesar, but after Antony's failed Parthian campaign and Octavian's success against Sextus Pompey, the propaganda increased in intensity and became more purposeful and vicious. It had been suggested that by the winter of 35–34 Octavian was already making much of Antony's treatment of Octavia. Just as the contrast between the sober Octavian and the reckless Antony was carefully developed, Octavian emphasised the parallel contrast between the virtues of Antony's wife Octavia and the depravities of his mistress Cleopatra. Antony's repudiation of Octavia enabled Octavian to focus on Cleopatra as the real enemy, the evil woman who had turned Antony from a successful Roman general into a willing tool for the execution of the Egyptian Queen's designs on world domination.

Even now, at the end of 35, the final conflict was not inevitable, but the way was definitely open.

THE SUPREMACY OF OCTAVIAN, 35–32 BC

Antony was consul in 34, but *in absentia*, and only for one day. He installed Lucius Sempronius Atratinus in his place. After a delay of one year he intended now to settle accounts with Artavasdes of Armenia. It seems there were diplomatic exchanges to begin with which yielded very little. Artavasdes refused family marriage ties with Antony and Cleopatra. Antony invited the Armenian king to join him in an expedition against Parthia. It was probably a ploy to test the Armenian king's mood and to provide the excuse for either a forcibly renewed alliance, or an invasion, or both. If Antony intended to launch another campaign against Parthia he needed to secure Armenia on a much more solid basis, even though it might take up valuable time. An ideal opportunity for another campaign had presented itself, since the Parthian king Phraates was deeply involved once again with his own dynastic squabbles with his family and his nobles, or what was left of them after his judicious disposal of the most troublesome elements. However much of this was known to the Romans and to the Armenian court, Artavasdes declined the invitation to join Antony's legions in another foray into Parthia.

Antony's response was to march to Nicopolis, a city founded by Pompey after his victories over Mithridates. The surviving story of Antony's Armenian campaign is suspect to say the least, because he is made to appear slipshod, disorderly, and devious. The whole episode is construed as a desire for revenge with no strategic purpose behind it; and even though there was a successful outcome from the Roman point of view, Antony's achievement is attributed to underhand activity and sheer good luck rather than good management. Any suggestion of military competence is obliterated from the record. It is probably true that Dellius was sent to negotiate with Artavasdes. That was, after all, Dellius' speciality. He had been sent to negotiate with Cleopatra when Antony summoned her to Tarsus, so it is to be expected that Dellius combined Roman authority with a certain amount of tactful deference. Perhaps, as Antony had expected, the negotiations failed; so the next step was to employ his troops to force Artavasdes to come to terms. Antony marched to Artaxata, where he invited Artavasdes to a conference. The king arrived and was promptly arrested with most of his family, put in chains (albeit made of silver), and sent to Alexandria as a prisoner. Roman garrisons were

installed in Armenia. Shortly afterwards Antony returned to Alexandria and issued coins bearing the legend ARMENIA DEVICTA, or 'Armenia conquered'. There is an element of ridicule in the story that has come down to us, no doubt inserted into the account by Octavian's propaganda in order to diminish Antony's standing in Rome. In contemporary terms, Octavian could not afford to allow Antony to eclipse him. When he began to mobilise against him it was in his interests to portray Antony as an incompetent villain and to denigrate his eastern campaigns as purposeless failures. Even after his death there could be no slackening of the perception of Antony as corrupt, even perverted, and there could certainly be no suggestion that he might after all have been a good general with a sound policy in mind when he invaded Armenia.

Yet the operation was probably not as ridiculous as it is made to seem. Simple revenge for the desertion of Artavasdes in the Parthian campaign will not suffice as the sole excuse for Antony's expedition. It was a costly enterprise and a long march, and was much more than a punitive campaign. The territory was overrun and converted into a Roman province, complete with military garrison and the rapid infiltration of Roman settlers and traders. Antony's claim to have conquered Armenia was perfectly correct, so Octavian could not deny it, but chose instead to cast doubt on the motives and methods that Antony used to achieve it. Treachery may have been the only way to capture Artavasdes; but there is no firm corroboration for the accusation, and if it is true then at least Antony has no previous convictions on these charges.

Conquest is not usually a gentle process whatever the circumstances and it cannot be said that the Romans were generally conscience stricken about the loss of life or the downfall of kings. The reason why Antony's campaign was depicted as useless and rather comic was doubtless because, far from being ill-advised, it promised to bring him success. He had prepared the ground for the last few years by installing independent but trustworthy rulers in the territories of the east, and two years after his disastrous defeat in Parthia he was ready to try again. With Armenia converted into a Roman province, his renewed advance into Parthian territory would be greatly facilitated. If he had to retreat again, then at least he would not have to march through a potentially hostile country once he had arrived at the border of Armenia.

The Roman conquest of Armenia was thorough enough and would probably have fulfilled Antony's purpose, but it did not long survive him. During the civil war between Antony and Octavian, the Parthian court was embroiled in civil strife of its own, when Tiridates, perhaps

a general in the Parthian army, ousted Phraates and drove him out of the kingdom. In the same year that Alexandria fell to Octavian, Phraates won his kingdom back again. Stronger than ever now, Phraates also overran both Media and Armenia. There was no one to stop his progress, so he installed Artaxes as a Parthian dependent on the Armenian throne and probably rejoiced when the latter massacred all the Roman settlers and traders. Octavian, the victor of Actium and Alexandria, did not repair the damage by restoring Roman rule in Armenia. To have done so would have entailed embarking on a full-scale war with Parthia, so Octavian acquiesced in the loss of the territory and Armenia reverted to an independent state on the borders of the Parthian and Roman Empires. If Octavian was to save face for not settling accounts with the Parthians and not putting a garrison back into Armenia he was constrained to prevent any credit for the initial conquest from attaching itself to the name of Antony. He could not redress the balance, so what he could not obtain was presented as unworthy and unprofitable, and its original conqueror was depicted in the same light.

The next step after the garrisoning of Armenia was to ally with, or perhaps invade, the kingdom of Media. Fortunately for the Romans, the king of Media, usually referred to as the Median Artavasdes to distinguish him from the Armenian king, had fallen out with the Parthian Phraates over the distribution of the spoils from Antony's defeated army. He had renounced his alliance with Parthia and now proposed an alliance with Antony. This was accepted. The Median Artavasdes returned to Antony the captured standards of the two legions which had escorted the siege train during the invasion of 36. A betrothal was arranged between the daughter of Artavasdes and the son of Antony and Cleopatra, Alexander Helios. The little girl was brought to Alexandria in fulfilment of the alliance.

Thus it was apparent that Antony was about to embark upon another Parthian campaign, and this time, by dint of careful preparation, he might be successful. If so, his prestige in Rome would eclipse that of Octavian and his power in the east would be immeasurably increased. His legions were prepared and in position for the projected invasion, planned for the early summer of 33. If Octavian was to stop Antony and prevent him from gaining tremendous credit as well as military power, then he had to do so very soon.

While Antony organised Armenia as a Roman province, Octavian was fighting in Illyricum, making a name for himself as a general. These campaigns would have to be brought to a successful conclusion before he could turn his attention to Antony, but in the meantime his

associates in Rome kept him in the public eye. Buildings, road works, policing for personal safety and security of property, provision of food and clean water, and the proper control of the sewage system of Rome all became the concern of Octavian and his colleagues. Agrippa had been given high office and independent commands, but now assumed the lowly role of aedile in 33 in order to inspect and repair the sewers and put in water-pipes and fountains.

Antony's generals also built temples and improved public facilities, but somehow their achievements were marginalised, outshone by everything that Octavian's men did. Gaius Sosius held a triumph in 34 for his exploits in the Jerusalem campaign when Herod won back his kingdom, but although Antonian generals featured almost as often as Octavian's men in the self-congratulatory military displays, collectively they were farther away and their achievements were not so carefully orchestrated. Even so, Antony may have succeeded in winning popular sympathy in Rome, but after the Armenian adventure he gave Octavian valid reasons to fear that his power may increase, and also everything that he required to present Antony as a threat to Rome.

When he returned to Alexandria in the autumn of 34, Antony paraded through the streets in a chariot, with his Armenian captives walking behind him. Cleopatra watched while seated high above the procession, with Caesarion at her side. It was too much like a parody of the Roman triumph for comfort, and though Antony probably had every right to do as he pleased, and may even have intended to provoke Octavian, the scenario as presented in Rome did him irreparable damage. It had sacrilegious undertones because the spoils of victory were traditionally dedicated to Jupiter Optimus Maximus, in his temple in Rome. Antony deprived the chief godhead of this privilege by staging his pseudo-triumph in a foreign city.

After the parade through the streets of Alexandria, either on the same day or a short time later, Antony and Cleopatra staged another ceremony which is known to historians as the Donations of Alexandria. Before a large gathering, seated next to Cleopatra on a high throne, with the children in front of them on smaller thrones, Antony distributed territories, some of which were not yet conquered, to the immediate benefit of Cleopatra and her children. Alexander Helios was to rule Armenia, Media, and Parthia. At the time of the ceremony, Armenia was a Roman province and so it was feasible that with Antony, or his generals, in command there, Alexander Helios would be able to take up his role as king, supported by Roman troops. His betrothal to the daughter of the Median Artavasdes would probably confer on him the rule of Media. The only doubtful element

was Parthia, which was not yet conquered and garrisoned; so this was more a declaration of future intent on Antony's part than a true statement of the status quo.

Cleopatra Selene was to be ruler of Cyrenaica and Libya, and Ptolemy Philadelphus, aged about two, was given Syria and Cilicia. Antony did not set himself up as king in his own right, being content with his position as Roman Triumvir and commander of the east, but he was obviously playing the part of consort of the Queen of Egypt. He now proclaimed that her son, the thirteen-year-old Caesarion, was the legitimate heir of Caesar. The coins that Antony issued proclaiming his Armenian conquests bore another message on the reverse with the legend CLEOPATRAE REGINAE REGUM FILIORUM REGUM, 'To Cleopatra, Queen of kings and of the sons of kings'.

The territories that were granted to Cleopatra were those which she already controlled, under the command of Antony and his legates. Roman administrative arrangements were retained for all the territories of the east, Roman governors and their staffs were not usurped, Roman revenues were not wholly directed into Cleopatra's treasury to the detriment of Roman rule, and Antony still presided over the eastern territories as he had legitimately done since the formation of the Triumvirate and the various adjustments that had been made since then. The Donations of Alexandria, presented as megalomaniac presumption on Antony's part, were not much different from the arrangements that Pompey or any other important Roman general normally made in organising territories, annexing some of them, and entrusting others to friendly kings and rulers, who received lands and privileges in return for keeping their people in order and sometimes contributing troops. Cleopatra's contribution to Antony's military forces probably concerned transport ships and galleys, as well as crews. In this respect she was like any other ruler allied to a Roman commander; and if she had been a man, the arrangement would not be construed as scandalous, and the complications of sexual scandal and relationships would not have arisen.

From Octavian's point of view, the pseudo Roman triumph, if such it was, and the distribution of territory could be magnified and utilised to discredit Antony and Cleopatra, but the most damaging aspect of the ceremonies in Alexandria was the fact that Antony publicly recognised Caesarion's claim to the throne of Egypt, which the boy currently shared with his mother, Cleopatra. Caesarion would one day inherit Egypt as his sole preserve. As ruler of Egypt, Caesarion was just about tolerable, but as ruler of an independent country, where wealth was being steadily accrued and territories were being enlarged, he would not require assistance from Rome as previous

Ptolemaic rulers had done, and the potential for Roman control would be diminished. Worse still, Caesarion as heir of Caesar as well as successor to Cleopatra was a direct challenge to Octavian.

As far as Octavian was concerned, there was only one legitimate heir of Caesar. Thus far, however, the threat was purely personal, so it was not yet a cause which Octavian could realistically expect the whole of the Roman people to take up on his behalf. Egypt was not yet a Roman province, and Antony had not yet stepped too far outside the boundaries of Roman practice. If he went on to win a great victory in Parthia and settled the eastern frontier once and for all, the people of Rome would profit from the booty and the opportunities for settlement and trade, so they could afford to forgive Antony for his little lapse in Alexandria when he seemed to mock the Roman triumph.

There was a need for rapid conversion of Antony from potential hero to ominous enemy, so Octavian set about this task early in 33, as soon as the campaigns in Illyricum could be drawn to a happy conclusion. He embarked on a systematically organised torrent of abuse against Antony, launched by a speech in the Senate early in the year. Octavian was consul in 33 but, more important, he was unassailable on account of his grant of tribunician sacrosanctity that was one of the rewards for his victory over Sextus Pompey in 36. He was not yet supreme in Italy, but he perhaps felt that there was no time to be lost in paving the way towards blackening Antony's name. His first speech would be a reliable test of the mood of the Senate and people of Rome, so he could estimate from its reception and the extent of the reaction how far he would have to go to achieve his aim. The timing of this inflammatory speech is not established beyond doubt and is consequently disputed. Some authors would place it at the beginning of 32, but it fits well with the situation in 33, when Antony was about to launch another attack on Parthia, and when the second term of the Triumvirate was coming to an end.

This too is the subject of considerable ongoing debate, because it is not known what exactly was agreed when the Triumvirate was renewed, and the sources contradict each other. Appian states that the Triumvirate was to be terminated at the end of 32, and some modern scholars agree, on the supposition that the second five-year term was dated from January 36. On the other hand, it is possible to argue that if the new inaugural date really was 36, then the Triumvirate suffered a break between the end of 37 and the beginning of the following year, which some authorities find hard to accept, especially since Augustus himself declared in his *Res Gestae* (literally, 'Things Done'), written near the end of his life, that he was Triumvir for ten

consecutive years. If this is not an outright lie, it implies that there was no break in 37–36.

It is significant that Octavian ceased to use the title Triumvir before the legal agreement came to an end, whereas Antony used it for much longer. On coins issued in 31, he still proclaimed himself Triumvir, exceeding the ten-year limit that Octavian scrupulously observed. The broad general picture is clear. At the end of 33, or one year later, the Triumvirate would end, and Octavian was anxious to make an unequivocal statement that he did not intend to enter into another agreement with Antony.

The grounds for a personal break with Antony were already present in his treatment of his wife Octavia, a fact which Octavian had been using to his own advantage probably for the last two years. This would incense the people, but might not move the Senate. It would have been tremendously difficult for Octavian if Antony had been detached and independent, acting purely as a Roman official at the head of Roman armies. In that case, Octavian would have had to employ even more unscrupulous tactics to stir up feeling against him. Fortunately for his enemies, Antony had a long history of eastern associations and sympathies, a reputation for drunkenness and renegade social behaviour, and now an obvious affinity with the Queen of Egypt. It was upon Cleopatra that Octavian began to focus much more sharply. Antony was the real target but it was much more acceptable and far more politically correct to instigate a war against a foreign enemy. Octavian had proclaimed an end to civil wars when he had defeated Sextus Pompey, so he would lose face now if he had to go back on his word and try to persuade the Roman people to embark on yet another civil war.

Something of the new feeling in Rome reached Antony while he was in Armenia in 33. He defended himself with a counterblast against Octavian that revealed that he had a firm grasp on political reality, much as he had shown himself fully aware of the situation when Cicero was stirring up hostility towards him before the battles of Mutina. Antony pointed out that Octavian had not returned all the ships that he had borrowed before the battle of Naulochus, and he had not kept his word about the 20,000 soldiers that he was supposed to send as his part of the bargain. Belatedly taking up the cause of Lepidus, Antony castigated Octavian for his treatment of their third partner. Favourable publicity in Italy may have been one of the motives behind this accusation, since Lepidus had not been foremost on Antony's list of priorities until now.

His veterans, on the other hand, were dearer to him, and he accused Octavian of partiality to his own veterans at the expense of

Antony's troops. This was the cause that Lucius and Fulvia had taken up before their defeat at Perusia; and from then onwards for a while Antonian troops had been settled peacefully in Italy. More recently, however, Octavian had been settling many more of his own veterans, probably at the expense of Antony's men. Even if Antony's accusation was false, many people in Italy probably thought it was an accurate assessment, so Antony appealed to them when he protested about the situation in his letter. Reputedly he also blamed Octavian for not sharing the province of Sicily with him. Here he was not standing on very firm ground. The story may be suspect, but it allowed Octavian to reply that he would partition Sicily just as soon as Antony partitioned Armenia and gave him half of it.

Then the abuse became more personal. Octavian wrote to Antony reproaching him for his rejection of Octavia and his elevation of Caesarion, but most of all for his relationship with Cleopatra. Antony replied in kind, in a letter that is famously reproduced in Suetonius' life of Augustus and quoted in Chapter 1. It is a crude soldier's letter, perhaps authentic, in which Antony says that sexual relationships do not really mean anything and that Octavian himself was known to have taken all sorts of women to bed. But he also asks why there should be any surprise concerning Cleopatra given that '*uxor mea est*' (she is my wife). Convolved theories have been proposed about this simple phrase. Those who do not believe that there was ever any form of marriage ceremony between Antony and Cleopatra are forced to the conclusion that this sentence ought to be converted into a question, so it can be rendered 'Is she my wife?' The implication would then be that it was perfectly acceptable for Antony to associate with Cleopatra and produce children by her because he had not taken the final step of entering into a bigamous and illegal foreign marriage. There were no helpful punctuation marks in the Latin which would settle the question once and for all. On balance, it is best to take Antony's statement at face value, since he could very easily have inserted '*non*' between '*mea*' and '*est*' to make himself crystal clear.

Acceptance of Antony's statement as confirmation that Cleopatra was his wife, even if only according to Egyptian law, presupposes that he was fully aware that his marriage was illegal on two counts: because it was arranged while he was still married to Octavia – so it was a bigamous union – and Romans were forbidden to marry foreigners. This was a situation that Octavian could use against him to great advantage.

Another war of words followed, with accusations winging their way between Rome and Armenia; but by itself that would not have been a cause for concern. It had happened before. What finally

brought Antony out of Armenia before he had begun any military activity against Parthia was the realisation that Octavian had won over too many people and had probably browbeaten the Senate into submission. Support in Rome was vital and Antony stood to lose too much if he allowed Octavian to go on alienating him. In the autumn of 33 he turned his face towards Rome and away from Parthia. He now had to win over the Senate to his side. He began by asking for formal ratification of his acts in the east. It was a diplomatic move, not strictly necessary, because before he left Rome in October 39 he had already secured from the Senate ratification for everything he had done and was likely to do. More importantly, he offered to relinquish his Triumviral powers if Octavian would comply and surrender his powers as well. It was Caesar and Pompey all over again, and people in Rome and Italy must have begun to feel very tense.

By November 33 Antony had bowed to the inevitable and started to prepare for war. He ordered the faithful Canidius to bring the army out of Armenia and he began to assemble troops around his winter base at Ephesus. Cleopatra joined him there. Her resources in money, ships, and manpower would be very necessary; so when some of the Romans in Antony's army protested that she should be sent home to Egypt Canidius for one countered that she had every right to stay, since she was paying the army. He was promptly accused of accepting bribes from the Queen to support her. He was probably innocent of the charge as it stood but he had certainly profited from his association with her and with Antony. Some evidence of the privileges accorded to him came to light in 2001 in Berlin, where a fragment of papyrus was discovered, reused inside a mummy case. It concerns an agreement made in 33 allowing Canidius to import wine and export wheat, without paying the normal taxes that would have been imposed on such transactions. It is thought that the Greek phrase at the bottom of the document authorising its contents may have been written by Cleopatra herself, though there is no signature. But this arrangement does not necessarily signify bribery and corruption for the purpose of gaining Canidius' support. He remained loyal to the end, from choice rather than compulsion.

The account of the argument between the officers and Canidius indicates that the seeds of dissension in Antony's army were firmly planted and could not be eradicated at this stage. At some point, Munatius Plancus pointed out that if Cleopatra withdrew to Egypt then Octavian could not represent the coming war as a foreign campaign against her. He would be forced to admit that he was making war on Antony and his followers, breaking his promise that he would put an end to civil wars.

If Cleopatra had removed herself, it is possible that her soldiers and ships' crews would have gone with her. It was, after all, her wealth which supported the army. Antony could not possibly break with her decisively and stand alone. If war were to be declared against either of them, Antony and Cleopatra would have to fight side by side, since neither of them could now hope for an independent reconciliation with Octavian. But unfortunately everything that Octavian said about Cleopatra would henceforth find its mark not only at Rome but also in Antony's army

At the beginning of 32 the Antonian generals Sosius and Domitius Ahenobarbus took up office as consuls. Theoretically, all should have gone well for Antony with two of his officers as chief magistrates but Octavian had been strengthening himself and was ready for any eventuality. The story goes that Antony had sent a dispatch to his consuls to be read in the Senate but the two men decided that it was too infamous to be revealed. This sounds like retrospective propaganda after the defeat of Antony, rather than a sudden fit of abject cowardice on the part of the consuls. Among other things, Antony's communication purported to outline the Donations of Alexandria, which strictly speaking must have been old news in Rome by this time. There is considerable doubt as to the authenticity of the tale. As it stands it condemns Antony for his character and behaviour but in the absence of a fully documented description of the circumstances it is open to speculation. First, it may not even be true, but might be a later shadowy interpolation to denounce Antony by vague but credible accusations against him. The distribution of territory that he had made to Cleopatra was nothing new when he indulged in the ceremonial in Alexandria, but an unsubstantiated suggestion that there might have been more damaging activities that had been suppressed would work wonders in the tense political situation that Octavian had engineered. There is nothing so damning as rumour, which can be embroidered, elaborated upon, and inflated according to the whims of the audience. If it is true that Antony's letter contained information too dangerous to reveal to the Roman public in January 31, it attests to the effectiveness of Octavian's steady campaign against Antony, suggesting that he had whipped up feeling to flashpoint.

Subsequent events simply brought the fervour to a conclusion. Octavian was not in Rome in February when Sosius made a speech denouncing him. If he did not dare to read out Antony's letter, Sosius apparently had enough courage to try to turn the tables on Octavian. It is not known what he said, but his speech may have reiterated something that Antony had pointed out in a letter to Octavian during

their war of words in 33, namely that the major obstacle to the restoration of the Republic was Octavian himself and his single-minded pursuit of power. Sosius probably asked the Senate to declare Octavian out of order, if not actually anything more serious. It is not generally considered that he wished to declare Octavian an enemy of the state; and if there had been the merest suggestion of such an enormity Octavian would have used it as the justification for the civil war. Whatever it was, the tribune Nonius Balbus vetoed the suggestion. No one knows whether Nonius was in the pay of Octavian to protect his interests or in the pay of the Antonians to rescue them from an impossible situation if the speech in the Senate went badly wrong. The meeting broke up inconclusively.

Octavian lost no time now. His legal position and the nature of his power are not clarified. If the Triumvirate had indeed ended in December 33, then he had no legal office, and should not have been able to command troops. But the legal niceties were perhaps never fully investigated or elucidated. The realities of power were clear enough and were after all the only things that counted now. Returning to Rome with a bodyguard, Octavian convened a meeting of the Senate, entered the meeting in force, and sat between the two consuls. His action was undoubtedly illegal, but the time for propriety was long past. He said that he would bring documentary proof to the next meeting that would condemn Antony out of hand. No one knows what this evidence was, and Octavian was never put to the test of producing it; the mere threat was sufficient. The result was pandemonium. The two consuls and many senators fled to Antony. It is said that 300 senators joined Antony, but the figure is only a guess, derived from the fact that much later Octavian, by then transformed into Augustus, declared that 700 senators remained with him. The assumption is that the full Senate after Caesar had augmented it comprised 1,000 members. One thousand minus 700 equals 300 and that is the number that is thought to have gone to Antony at Ephesus.

On the face of it this immediate reaction was extreme, but there is no proper documentation of the background. Senators do not uproot themselves and sail to another part of the world because of a few speeches in the Senate House. They will have seen all the signs that are lost to a modern audience, and interpreted them correctly. Too many of them would remember the proscriptions of only a decade ago, when the world saw precisely how far both Octavian and Antony would go to gain their ends. To be caught in the crossfire was not wise, and for some men neutrality would not be a viable option. That would be possible only if a long foundation of impartiality had already been laid. The choice was to side with Octavian and go to war with

Antony, or vice versa: to join Antony and fight Octavian. There can be no record of what preceded these events because Octavian will have had a vested interest in obscuring the opening stages of the war. He had carefully engineered it for his own ends, so both for contemporaries and indeed retrospectively he had to make it seem that he was saving the state from a terrible menace. This menace was not specifically Antony but Cleopatra and the use to which she might put him. The vilification of the Egyptian Queen was actively pursued from now onwards. It was one way of unifying the opposition.

If the remaining senators needed any more urging to war, Octavian found the ideal tool. Sensing the way that the wind was blowing, Antony's generals Titius and Plancus deserted him and came to Octavian in Rome. They perhaps could not tolerate the close relationship of Antony with Cleopatra, or at least could not tolerate the way in which her continued presence played into Octavian's hands. Plancus had tried to explain this to Antony and had been ignored. Antony finally divorced Octavia in 32 so perhaps until that point the Romans in Antony's entourage could believe that he was still committed to her and perhaps to Octavian, with the Egyptian Queen as a profitable ally. More likely, men like Titus and Plancus simply wanted to survive and therefore had to be on the winning side, which they now calculated would be Octavian's. The divorce of Octavia and the desertion of Titus and Plancus could be linked together, to suggest that even Antony's own men were disgusted with his behaviour.

According to legend, Titius and Plancus told Octavian that Antony had written his will and lodged it with the Vestals in Rome, as was the usual custom. Another variation on this tale is that it was kept by a friend of Antony's; but wherever it was, its location was revealed to Octavian, who immediately searched for it, found it, and opened it, with no witnesses. This was one more fortunate opportunity to reveal to the Romans just how depraved Antony had become. The enormity of Octavian's action was perhaps overshadowed by what he found in the will, or said that he had found. It was well known that he had opened the will in private, but seemingly no one accused him of forgery, of all or part of it.

The sentiments expressed in Antony's will were so plausible that perhaps it never occurred to anyone that the contents as read out by Octavian may not have been authentic. The main points in it were that Antony reaffirmed the legitimacy of the claims of Caesarion as Caesar's son, and as co-ruler with Cleopatra, and heir to the Egyptian throne. Antony granted legacies to his children by Cleopatra, which meant that he acknowledged them as his own; he clearly intended Antyllus to be his personal heir, and had issued coins with his own

head and that of his son on them. The most damaging part of Antony's will was his obvious determination to remain with Cleopatra, even after death, for he asked that he should be buried alongside her in Alexandria. He seemed now to have renounced Rome altogether; but it was also implied that his schemes for world domination involved supplanting Rome in favour of the Egyptian city. It was rumoured that Caesar had intended to rule the world from Alexandria, so it was quite believable that Antony planned to remove the seat of government there. He had formed an alternative government from the senators who had fled to join him, so perhaps his next step was to create a new capital. This threat was enough to make the Romans clamour for war, in unified antagonism towards Cleopatra and her bewitched consort Antony.

The united front of the Roman people was useful, but Octavian was thorough in exploiting it, thus revealing the caution with which he laid his plans. He arranged that all of Italy should swear an oath of allegiance to him, with the exception of those towns where Antony had many clients, the chief of which was Bononia (modern Bologna). There were precedents for using the Italian towns to pressure the Senate to act, as for instance when Pompey asked the municipalities to agitate for the recall of Cicero from exile. Octavian's use of the Italian municipalities was something different in that what he extracted from them was an oath to a leader, not to Rome itself, and not to the Senate. It may have been the foundation of the oath sworn to each new Emperor, when the Empire had been firmly established, but in 32 it was quite novel. It gave Octavian the moral authority to act as he did against Cleopatra, quite separately from any legal command he might be given. Augustus stated in his *Res Gestae* that the oath was sworn spontaneously by all of Italy, which simple declaration belies a great deal of preparation and paperwork, not to mention some little coercion.

The next problem was to declare war in a proper fashion. The excuse was that Cleopatra aimed at domination of the Roman world; and it seemed eminently believable by now, so feelings ran high. It was therefore to be a just war, waged in self-defence, as all Roman wars were said to be, but there must be some ceremonial in declaring it. Octavian revived a very old ritual whereby a patch of earth was designated as enemy territory, and war was declared by the action of throwing a spear into it. Characteristically, Octavian appealed to the distant Roman past to give his actions an unassailable authenticity. It was to be a constant theme of his supremacy that he modernised the Roman world only within the framework of ancient tradition, unsullied by foreign values or practices. That was where Antony had

gone wrong, and his fate should be a lesson to all.

DECLINE AND FALL, 32–30 BC

Antony spent the winter of 32–31 at Patrae, on the north coast of Achaëa, watching over the Gulf of Corinth. His troops were strung out along the coast of Greece from Corcyra to Methone, with the largest number camped near the Gulf of Ambracia. There is a narrow channel leading into the waters of the gulf, guarded by two peninsulas that stretch around it on the north and the south, like two encircling arms. Antony's men watched the entrance from the southern peninsula, on the side near to Actium, from which the naval battle of 31 takes its name. Antony had built up a huge fleet of about 500 ships, perhaps the largest that had ever operated in one war. He had about eleven legions, though Plutarch says that he had sixteen. These were not all at full strength, but Antony had also recruited native levies, especially cavalry, so in terms of numbers he had no serious worries about facing Octavian when he appeared. Antony had also organised food depots at various locations and his naval communications were good, but he had to guard the long craggy coast of Greece with all its inlets and landing places. That was to prove an impossible task, and naturally reduced the number of ships and personnel at his disposal at the battle of Actium.

Octavian was able to play upon the fears of the Roman and Italians that Antony might descend on the coasts in an attempt to invade Italy, but there was probably no reason to imagine that Antony would consider this possibility. His problems in gaining access to Brundisium on more than one occasion when the town closed its gates to him showed how difficult an invasion of Italy would be.

On the other hand, although he intended to remain in Greece, Antony had probably already decided against repeating the pattern of the two previous civil wars, where the major battles were fought on land. He clung to the coast and did not withdraw into Macedonia, nor did he really pay much attention to the hinterland of his coastal bases. Consequently, he had little or no communication with the land to the rear of his army, but instead faced resolutely and exclusively westwards. He has been accused of putting the security of Egypt before everything else; or, even worse, it has been suggested that he was primarily concerned for his own and Cleopatra's personal safety. The ancient sources for the campaign strategy and the battle of Actium are meagre, which leaves many questions unanswered. High-

sounding Latin literature about it abounds, but it is retrospective and laudatory, epoch-making in intent and quite out of proportion with the actual events. It seems that there was no heroic battle but a series of skirmishes on land and a few exchanges at sea. Antony is portrayed almost as a man in a dream, completely unable to develop or carry out a plan.

From the evidence of the ancient writers, if what has come down to us can be called evidence, it is not feasible to reconstruct a coherent account of the campaign. It was a long and drawn out affair lasting for several months, but only some disconnected details are known. Antony did not use his fleet to engage Octavian at sea while he crossed from Italy in the spring of 31, but allowed him to sail unopposed from Brundisium across the Adriatic, and then land most of his army not far from the point where Caesar disembarked his troops in 48, before Pharsalus. Octavian's army and his fleet then progressed southwards down the coast, and Octavian himself was able to set up a base at Corfu, because the Antonian ships had withdrawn from the island. Quite rapidly, Octavian arrived at the northern peninsula of the Gulf of Ambracia. His first thought would have been to try to gain control over the mouth of the gulf, but it was too well defended by Antony's troops. Octavian moved off further up the northern peninsula and dug in at Mikhalitzi.

Antony and the bulk of his army joined the troops on the southern peninsula, made camp, and almost immediately afterwards crossed the mouth of the gulf with the allied cavalry and some of the legionaries to try to cut off Octavian's camp from its water supply. But the attack failed because Antony's native troops deserted to Octavian. A second attempt, led by Antony in person, also failed because this time even Amyntas, who had been made king of Galatia thanks to Antony, went over to Octavian. Presumably very dispirited, Antony ferried his troops back over the entrance to the gulf and camped once again on the southern peninsula. The narrative sounds suspiciously simple, as though everything that Antony did was a supreme failure, but coin evidence shows that at some point the soldiers hailed him as Imperator for the fourth time in his career, which means that he did enjoy at least one victory. The context is not known but it perhaps suggests that the attempt to blockade and cut off Octavian's camp was not such a shambles as it has been described. There may have been some hard fighting which Octavian would rather forget. One of the main problems is that there is no properly established chronology for the whole campaign, and only Octavian's successes are elaborated upon. Antony's little excursion across the gulf is made to seem transitory and wasteful.

Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa commanded Octavian's fleet, very practised and confident after the victory at Naulochus four and a half years earlier. He used his experience to good effect, first capturing Methone and gaining a base in the Peloponnese, and then going on to annihilate the Antonian ships at Leucas. Shortly afterwards he took Patrae and then Corinth. This left Octavian's fleet free to block the mouth of the Gulf of Ambracia, where Antony's ships were consequently bottled up. Gaius Sosius tried to break out with at least a part of the Antonian fleet, but he was defeated and driven back. Thus, from the landward side and then from the sea, Agrippa and Octavian were able to tighten the circle around Antony, creating considerable difficulties for him in receiving supplies. Octavian meanwhile built two walls from his camp on the northern peninsula down to the sea, like a miniature Athens, and thus ensured that his own supplies could be delivered by his ships.

Antony's most pressing need at the opening of the campaign was for a quick victory over Octavian, either on land or over the fleet. Once he had lost the initiative, he also seems to have lost the momentum. He needed to bring Octavian to battle, and he stayed too long in trying to force the issue. By remaining at Actium instead of marching away and making Octavian follow him, or sit idly waiting for him to come back, Antony had sealed his own doom. The position of his camp was not very salubrious, and his troops began to fall sick. Supplies were short, and there was no fodder. Malaria and dysentery caused havoc as the hot weather arrived, and morale plummeted to rock bottom. More of Antony's once trusted officers deserted him, including even Domitius Ahenobarbus, who was ill and died soon afterwards, and Quintus Dellius. The demoralising effect on Antony himself and the army must have been tremendous.

The reasons for the continual desertions have not been elucidated in great detail. The allied levies of infantry and cavalry may have been subverted by Octavian long before he arrived at Actium. Dio indicates that spies were active on both sides before the war started in earnest, and Antony sent money far and wide to recruit people to his cause. Octavian discovered what Antony was doing, and made more effort to buy loyalties in the east. Inscriptions such as those from Aphrodisias show that Octavian was no stranger to the cities of the east, and that he could give what amounted to direct orders to them without reference to Antony. In that case he would have found it reasonably easy to infiltrate the consciousness of the ruling classes of several cities and states via his agents. His political precedence at Rome and his recent victories in his Illyrian campaigns would enhance his reputation among the eastern states, increasing his value as

prospective ally. His talent for self-promotion and, more important, the amounts of money he could offer, would probably help the various rulers to make up their minds to join him rather than Antony. Octavian would need to concentrate on his dependability, to convince each king and potentate that he could guarantee and support their future prosperity and security.

Two of the principal tools that he used to gain credibility and support in Rome were fear and loathing of Cleopatra. He no doubt harped on the same theme in the east, where there was perhaps greater awareness of Cleopatra's intention to recreate the Egyptian trading empire of her ancestors. Octavian had probably kept local agents on his payroll for some time, agents who would whisper into the ears of the petty kings and noble rulers whom Antony had set up, suggesting that their future survival may be threatened if Antony kept up his association with Cleopatra. The Queen's track record so far would only support the suspicions of rulers of small kingdoms that they might be sacrificed to her ambition. No matter that she probably never intended to rule the whole of the east. She had acquired control over some of the most prosperous areas of the east for trade and commodities that Egypt required. From the outside it did seem that she had a preponderant influence over Antony. Octavian could harp on the Donations of Alexandria, suggesting that between them Antony and Cleopatra had five offspring, who were probably destined to rule more and more kingdoms. The fact that Antony had not succumbed to all Cleopatra's demands would carry no weight at all once the initial misgivings were planted in men's minds.

It is acknowledged that after Actium and the fall of Alexandria Octavian turned his full attention to the east, but made few changes to the arrangements and dispositions that Antony had made. One reason is undoubtedly that Antony had been eminently sensible in his choice of rulers and officials, and had reorganised territorial boundaries with intelligence. Another reason might be that Octavian had already had some long-standing dialogue with these rulers before he annihilated Antony, offering them as their rewards continued unassailable sovereignty in their domains. All he had to do was to convince them that there was a real danger of territorial encroachment by Cleopatra and then promise to protect them from it. Thus the oaths of loyalty that the allies swore to Antony in 31 were probably empty promises from the very beginning.

The Roman officers and senators who deserted to Octavian may have entertained the same fears once they saw Cleopatra in action. It is possible that they arrived on the scene with stories and rumours embedded in their minds that they were prepared to doubt, but then

they would find that some of the tales were true. Even if they merely saw the innocuous traits, it would set them wondering if the more damaging stories may also be true. After the staunchest supporters of Antony, such as Dellius and Domitius Ahenobarbus, had begun to desert, the remaining officers would feel very isolated. Antony further alienated both his allies and his senatorial colleagues by torturing Iamblichus, the king commanding his Arabian contingents, and by executing the senator Quintus Postumius. It may have been necessary to assert himself and try to restore discipline, but the effect on those still with him would only have been to increase their doubts about whether they were on the right side in this war.

Canidius remained, and in a meeting of the high command, according to Plutarch, he voted for a retreat eastwards into Macedonia, and then fighting a land battle, for which the Antonian army was best qualified. But to do so would involve the abandonment of the huge fleet. The story goes that Cleopatra was determined to use it, so the vote went her way, and Antony committed himself to a naval battle. It is said that he ordered the crews to take their sails with them, which he said would be needed to chase after the fleeing enemy ships if they reached the open sea. It is equally true that the sails would enable Antony's ships to move faster in an attempt to escape. The fact that Antony also put on board his treasure chests indicated that he did not intend to return to the harbour. To many of the soldiers, this signified the possibility that he intended to break out and sail away without even attempting to fight a proper naval battle. Antony's plans have been much discussed, without the possibility of resolution. The final result of the battle was the escape of only a few ships to the open sea, including Cleopatra's flagship, to which Antony transferred later to sail away with her towards Egypt. This may be what Antony had intended. His position at Actium was impossible; the army was disintegrating and the fleet would soon follow suit if it remained bottled up in the gulf.

The original large fleet could not be used because there were not enough men to crew them. The fighting men would be legionaries, and their numbers had been severely depleted in the camp on the southern peninsula, as disease had taken its toll. Antony therefore abandoned many of his ships, burning them so that they would not fall to Octavian. The sources indicate that he had about 200 out of the 500 that he had started with, but some of these would have been already lost in the various coastal actions fought under Agrippa as he took base after base until he assembled at Actium.

It is possible that Antony planned to fight for supremacy over Octavian's fleet and then if he could not achieve it to resort to a

breakout to save whatever he could of his men and ships. One explanation for carrying the sails is that Antony may have intended to make use of the freshening winds that usually blew up in the gulf in the afternoons, which might have enabled him to get round Agrippa's fleet and turn it. If he could do that, he would be able to cut the fleet off from the shore and separate it from Octavian's army, and perhaps roll it up by sheer weight of numbers, drawing the net all around it.

The weather was too unsettled to carry out this or any other plan until 2 September, when there was a calmer interlude in the morning. Antony came out in strength, putting himself and his flagship on his right, with which he tried to turn Agrippa's left. The two lines held their positions for a while, rowing now and then to keep their places. Agrippa made no move to close with Antony's fleet, so eventually Antony had to make a choice: to attack or to return to harbour. He moved forward with the right, leaving the slower centre behind. The race was now on, with the two lines of Agrippa's left and Antony's right gradually stretching out, each trying to outdo the other. They engaged quite fiercely and there were losses on either side. Then, in the rear, some of Antony's ships turned and went back into harbour and Cleopatra, perhaps ordered to do so, turned southwards, which left Antony's right unsupported and hard pressed. His own ship was in the thick of the fighting, and when the time came to escape he could not safely disengage. He left the flagship and transferred to a smaller craft, and then to Cleopatra's ship. He escaped to Egypt with perhaps fewer than 100 ships. It is hardly surprising that Octavian made such mileage out of the story of the battle of Actium.

Though the naval battle was over, the war was not yet won. Like Pompey after the battle of Pharsalus, Antony could regain his strength and regroup his army, which Canidius led by land from Greece to Egypt. But that required energy, and from the moment when Antony transferred to Cleopatra's ship his determination seems to have evaporated. Except for the duration of the brief attack by Octavian's pursuing ships, which he successfully averted, it was said that Antony spent the entire voyage of three days in the bows of the ship, silent and probably beyond words. He had known defeat before, but had always revived his own and his soldiers' spirits, and emerged fighting fit, ready for anything, without losing credibility or the faith of the army. This time he offered his friends money and the means of escape, because he thought his cause was lost, and he did not want to bring his friends down with him. By now he was becoming accustomed to desertions, so perhaps he wanted to pre-empt any further disappointment by weeding out those who wished to leave before he reached Egypt. He could not know it yet, but Canidius' troops were

subverted by Octavian's messengers, who caught up with them on their march. Mindful only of their own fate, the soldiers wrangled for profitable terms for seven days, and eventually Octavian agreed to all that they asked. Negotiation was better than fighting unnecessary battles, as both sides knew perfectly well. Octavian gambled on his future success, making promises of even greater rewards for the soldiers, hoping that he would be able to fulfil his promises later on. Canidius refused to join Octavian, and was allowed to continue his journey to join Antony in Egypt. His commitment to Antony ensured that when Octavian caught up with him again he received no mercy. It is to be hoped that Antony appreciated the qualities of this loyal officer.

Approaching the coast of northern Africa, Antony and Cleopatra could not be certain of their reception in Egypt. They landed first at Paraetionium (modern Mersah Matruh), to the west of Alexandria, while they sounded out the state of affairs in the city, which was reported to be calm and ready to receive the Queen. Antony needed to know whether the legions of Cyrenaica were still favourable to him. Perhaps it did not surprise him that they were not. Octavian's cash had probably preceded the arrival of Antony and Cleopatra.

Without giving a hint of defeat at Actium, Cleopatra sailed back to Alexandria, where she quickly asserted herself. As she entered the city her ships were decorated for victory and her demeanour was not subdued. She executed Artavasdes of Armenia, which would serve to secure the loyalties of his rival Artavasdes of Media. For a while Antony remained in the western desert. His state of mind can only be conjectured. He was perhaps suicidal, as Plutarch says. If he contemplated ending it all he did not go through with it, and finally went back to Alexandria to join Cleopatra.

It was certain that Octavian would eventually bring the war to Egypt, so there was much to be done before he arrived. Antony probably had little to hope for except survival. It is debatable whether he had ever entertained any ambition for mastery of Rome, or sole rule, but he had fought Octavian because the alternative was annihilation, which now seemed certain. Antony built himself a little retreat on the shoreline and called it the Timoneum, after Timon of Athens, whose claim to fame was his rejection of humanity and his life as a hermit. Cleopatra had now to defend her kingdom and her children, as well as her own life, by her own efforts. She did what she could to organise a united defence, presenting Caesarion to the people as Ptolemy XV; and at the same time Antony's elder son, Antyllus, was recognised as an adult by the Roman ceremony of assuming the *toga virilis*, exchanging his boy's clothing for the dress of a man. The

purpose of declaring the two boys the adult heirs of the Queen of Egypt and her consort Antony was probably to foster the appearance of continuity, to give the impression that she thought there was a future to plan for. She tried to revive Antony by the usual methods – parties, drinking, and late night revels. He joined in, but the Society of Inimitable Livers was replaced now by the Inseparables at Death. His attitude was justifiable. He had pared down his associates to those who would perhaps remain with him, and he knew that this time it would be to the bitter end, which he anticipated would indeed be bitter and probably not long in coming.

Octavian spent most of the winter on the island of Samos, interrupted by a hasty visit to Italy to settle disturbances there caused by the settlement of veterans. His friends Maecenas and Agrippa were unable to bring the situation under control. There was perhaps another problem. At some time, which is not established beyond doubt, the younger Lepidus tried to raise revolt against Octavian on behalf of his father, who was still powerless and disgraced, living in enforced retirement on his estates, almost under house arrest. Some scholars prefer to date this event to the following year, and there is no way of proving whether it occurred before or after the fall of Alexandria. Whenever it happened, it is eloquent testimony to the fact that Octavian was not universally accepted in Italy or Rome, but it is also testimony to the fact that he was powerful enough to end attempts at opposition quite smoothly.

During the winter, embassies sped back and forth between Octavian and Antony, and perhaps separately between Octavian and Cleopatra. It is said that Antony promised to do away with himself if Octavian would guarantee the safety of Cleopatra. If this is true, it shows that he had lost all hope and was prepared to resort to noble and heroic gestures. Perhaps he thought that he was the main object of Octavian's enmity and that once he was removed from the scene then Octavian could settle down and assume command of the entire Roman world. Indeed, Octavian corroborated this judgement by writing to Cleopatra, offering lenient terms if she would lay down her arms and surrender Antony. She refused, either because she loved Antony very deeply, as he perhaps loved her in offering his life for hers, or because they both knew that what Octavian really wanted was Egypt itself; and he meant to have it no matter that he might have to scramble over their dead bodies to get it. One of the greatest worries that beset Octavian was that Cleopatra might destroy all her treasure before he could seize it. He required astronomical sums of money to fulfil all the promises he had made to the soldiers and his allies, and control of the surplus food supply that Egypt could well

afford would not come amiss.

The country was united in its support of Cleopatra, and there were rumours of an uprising of the people on her behalf. She had always attended to the needs of the populace, to a far greater extent than the previous Ptolemies, and if she had given the word there would have been an army of common people marching to Alexandria ready to do her bidding. She refused the offer because she did not want to involve her people in war. She guessed correctly that Octavian would leave the people to get on with their lives if he could divert the taxes and the surplus food into his own coffers.

In the spring of 30 Octavian was ready to carry the war into Egypt. He returned to Greece and marched overland, reaching his objective by July. Cleopatra sent her son Caesarion, now aged sixteen, on a journey up the Nile into Upper Egypt, perhaps intending that he should cross the Red Sea or travel into Ethiopia and reach relative safety. In the meantime, Antony tried to prevent Cornelius Gallus from attacking Egypt from the west. He took a squadron of ships and some infantry to meet Gallus but was defeated and lost the ships. In the west, Cleopatra's general Seleucus half-heartedly defended Pelusium, but gave up and let Octavian's troops pass by unopposed. Antony rallied, took some cavalry to clash with Octavian's advance guard, which he routed, and sent them fleeing back to the main army. He returned to Alexandria flushed with success, celebrating his victory in the old style.

But it was all desperate bravado. Antony knew when he was beaten. Allegedly he challenged Octavian to single combat, and received the supercilious reply that surely he could find better ways to end his life. The main battle was to take place next day, on the first day of the month Sextilis – later renamed August, in honour of Augustus. Antony told his friends the night before the battle was fought that he could not hope to win and was merely looking for an honourable death. That same night haunting music was heard in the streets of Alexandria together with the noise of a procession of unseen people leaving the city by the eastern gate – the god Dionysus and his revellers deserting Antony before he finally fell.

The next morning the army on the high ground at the Canopus gate watched the fleet sail out to engage Octavian's ships, but they put up no fight. There was probably a prearranged signal, or perhaps some quick-thinking captains copied each other in quick succession as Antony's crews put up their oars and waited. Then the two fleets became one fleet as Antony's ships sailed towards Octavian's and joined them. The soldiers had perhaps expected something of the sort and may even have known that it was going to happen. There was no

reason why they should sacrifice themselves for a defeated man. It was much better to go over to Octavian now and perhaps obtain better terms from him than they could expect if they put up any resistance. The Antonian cavalry rode off with their swords sheathed. The legionaries fought desultorily for a while, then surrendered or ran away.

Antony rode back to Alexandria, wondering if Cleopatra had betrayed him. She had retired to her mausoleum and barricaded the door, so when Antony was told that she was already dead he had no real reason to doubt the story. He asked his slave Eros to kill him; but Eros killed himself instead, so Antony tried to stab himself with his sword. Even a quick death deserted Antony, for he only succeeded in wounding himself painfully. When he had revived sufficiently for Cleopatra's slaves to communicate with him he learned that she was not dead after all, so he had himself carried on a litter to her tomb where she and her two servants, Iras and Charmian, hauled him up to the level of the window and dragged the litter inside. The romantic death in Cleopatra's arms is probably true. Even if it could be proved beyond all doubt that it never happened that way, no one would be convinced because the scenario is part of western tradition. How and why the central characters arrived at this desperate point can be reinterpreted, amended, debated, and disputed, but once they *had* arrived at that point, history shades off into legend, and that is always more enduring than mere prosaic fact.

POSTERITY

Cleopatra survived for a few more days after Antony's death. Octavian negotiated with her, and both Plutarch and Dio say that he went to see her in her mausoleum, but there is probably no truth in the story. It may have been invented for dramatic effect. The ancient authors often used to depict such scenes in order to disseminate political and historical ideas of their own through the mouths of their main characters. It is also said that Octavian wanted to preserve Cleopatra alive for his triumph in Rome, but that too is probably make-believe. It was much tidier to take over Egypt with all contenders for its throne safely and quite unequivocally removed. The sympathies of the Egyptian people for their Queen might cause problems if she was allowed to survive, and those sympathies could also extend to her children.

Plutarch devotes several chapters of his biography of Antony to the last days of Cleopatra. She died most likely according to the traditional story: by the bite of the poisonous asp, which may have been arranged by Octavian, or perhaps in consultation with him. The legend says that as soon as he heard of her death he sent for the *psylli*, men who were trained to suck out the poison of snake bites. As more than one author has pointed out, it was very strange that Octavian should send for them if Cleopatra's death, and the manner of it, was supposed to have taken him by surprise. Some scholars have surmised that Octavian allowed Cleopatra to choose her own way of death because it relieved him of the necessity of executing her, and others have highlighted the religious connections between the asp and the divinity that its bite was supposed to bestow. In death, Cleopatra outdid anything that the Romans could have dreamed up for her. She was dressed in all her finery and wore her crown, which her devoted servants carefully arranged just before they too died with her. The whole scene is quite credible for a Queen who knew how important it was to cultivate and maintain an image.

Her son, Caesarion, was sought after and killed, because he represented a double threat to Octavian in that he was both heir to the Egyptian throne and had been recognised as Caesar's son. His fate was a foregone conclusion. Antyllus, who was only fourteen years old, was dragged out of hiding in the unfinished temple dedicated to his father, Antony, and killed on the spot. There were three other children, but

Octavian spared them. Alexander Helios, Cleopatra Selene, and Ptolemy Philadelphus were sent to Rome. Eventually Cleopatra Selene was married to king Juba of Mauretania, and lived out the rest of her life in North Africa. The two boys may have gone with her, or they may have remained in Rome, keeping a low profile. Their ultimate fates are unknown, but lack of knowledge about them need not denote their early demise. They may have grown up in the household of Octavia, who was famed for her care of all Antony's surviving children, even after his death. Iullus Antonius, Antony's second son by Fulvia, had a promising career, being married to Marcella, Octavia's daughter by her first husband. He was consul in 10, and went on to govern the province of Asia from 7 to 6. Unfortunately, he was implicated in the scandalous affair of 2 BC when Augustus' daughter, Julia, was accused of adultery with several eminent men. She was exiled and Iullus Antonius was executed.

Octavian honoured the last wishes of both Antony and Cleopatra and buried them side by side. Their tomb has never been found. Immediately afterwards, Octavian took over Egypt as his personal preserve. He installed as governor the general Cornelius Gallus, who had attacked from the west in coordination with Octavian's advance from the east. Gallus was not a senator but a member of the middle classes, the equites. Such an elevated command for an equestrian was an innovation, perhaps a hasty measure adopted because Gallus was on the spot and Octavian needed a suitable governor very quickly. If such it was, it became a regular equestrian post, one of the most sought after rewards of the equestrian career. Octavian-Augustus never readjusted the position of the governor of Egypt, nor the relationship of the province to himself. No senator was allowed to enter the country except by special dispensation from himself, and later Emperors saw no reason to relax this vigilance. Much of Rome's corn supply came from Egypt, and its wealth enabled Augustus to maintain his position in Rome, discharging his debts and paying all the promised donatives to his supporters and troops.

After having deliberately fomented war against her and defeated her, Octavian could afford to be more generous to the memory of Cleopatra than he had been to her person. The statue that Caesar had placed in the temple of Venus was allowed to remain there, and an Egyptian official, Cleopatra's friend Archibius, paid 1,000 talents to Octavian to save most of the other statues and portraits of her. Antony did not fare so well. The news of his death was read out in the Senate by Cicero's son, Marcus. It cannot have been merely a fortuitous choice of reader; the irony is obvious to say the least. The Senate declared Antony's birthday *nefastus*, and decreed that all statues,

busts, and portraits should be destroyed. The few items which remain may perhaps have been oversights, or they may even be wrongly identified. Only the coin portraits can legitimately claim to be unequivocal representations of Antony. His name was to be erased from all monuments all over the Roman world; in their zeal to comply, some provincials chiselled out the name Antonius wherever it seemed to be connected to the name Marcus, perhaps because Octavian had decided that such thoroughness was only right and proper. Thus Antony's memory was damned forever, and his reputation as a drunkard and a failure crystallized into accepted fact.

Antony's descendants included three Emperors of Rome and several kings or rulers of the eastern states that he had reorganised and administered as Roman Triumvir. From his early marriage with his cousin, the daughter of Antonius Hybrida, Antony had a daughter, Antonia, who was at first betrothed to the son of Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, but the marriage never took place. Instead she was sent to Tralles to marry a wealthy Greek called Pythodorus. Antonia gave birth to a daughter called Pythodoris, who married two of the rulers of eastern kingdoms who had been appointed by her grandfather Antony. The first was Polemo, king of Pontus, the man who had been captured and later ransomed during Antony's Parthian campaign. Augustus confirmed Polemo as king of Pontus, and granted him the kingdom of the Bosporus, but in 8 BC Polemo was killed while trying to pacify the territory. Pythodoris ruled Pontus after his death. With Polemo she had a son who became king of Armenia, and her daughter became a queen of Thrace, producing a brood of children who became rulers of a variety of eastern kingdoms. Thus Antony's eastern administration was continued by his great-great-grandchildren. Later, Pythodoris married Archelaus, king of Cappadocia, who had also been appointed by Antony. Augustus confirmed him as ruler of Cappadocia and gave him control of Rough Cilicia and Lesser Armenia. In AD 17 he was summoned to Rome by Tiberius, and died while he was there. His kingdom was annexed as a Roman province.

Antony and Octavia produced two daughters, both named, as custom dictated, Antonia. The elder Antonia was married to Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus, the son of Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus, who formed his own fleet after Philippi and eventually allied with Antony until just before the battle of Actium. The younger Antonia married Nero Claudius Drusus, the brother of Tiberius. The mother of these two men was Livia Drusilla, and their stepfather was Augustus. Clearly Augustus concentrated on the descent of the two Antonias from his sister Octavia, disregarding as far as possible their connection

with Antony.

The younger Antonia and Drusus had several children, one of whom was Germanicus, the general who died in suspicious circumstances in the east during the reign of Tiberius. He married Vipsania Agrippina, whose parents were Julia, the daughter of Augustus, and Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa, Augustus' friend and general. Vipsania Agrippina (known as the elder Agrippina, to distinguish her from her daughter) bore nine children for Germanicus. One of their sons was Gaius, better known as Caligula. When Germanicus was commander of the legions in Germany he took his wife and family with him. For his son Gaius, he had a child-sized set of armour made, and the boy was nicknamed by the soldiers 'Little Boots', after the *caligae*, the boots that the legionaries wore. The nickname stuck and is the name by which we know the third Emperor of Rome.

The youngest son of Antonia and Nero Claudius Drusus, was lame, slightly deaf, interested in history and languages, and considered to be an idiot. He was the future Emperor Claudius, grandson of Mark Antony and Octavia. The granddaughter of the elder Antonia and Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus was Messalina, the notorious wife of Claudius, who was executed. After the death of Messalina, Claudius married his niece Agrippina. She was the daughter of Vipsania Agrippina and Germanicus, and was therefore one of Caligula's sisters. Her first marriage had been to Gnaeus, the son of the elder Antonia and Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus. Gnaeus and Agrippina produced the Emperor Nero, who was brought into Claudius' household along with his mother at the time of her marriage to the Emperor.

Antony's descendants included several illustrious members of the Imperial family, and some who were of no credit to him, such as Caligula and Nero, his great-grandsons. He would probably have approved of his grandson, Claudius, who was clever and shrewd, industrious, and on the whole successful. He could be cruel, like Antony himself, but he was also generous, and he inherited Antony's talent for sensible administration. Claudius perhaps thought more highly of Antony than the rest of his family. When he restored Antony's memory, it was perhaps not a wholly self-centred gesture to tidy up his own ancestry and make it more respectable. Claudius read a lot, and he knew Asinius Pollio, who wrote a history of his times, and the part that Antony played in them.

So who and what was Mark Antony? Would he have disappeared without trace if he had not allied himself to Caesar? He could have entered upon a political career much earlier than he did, but seemed

disinclined for it. He started out with the disadvantage of a dead father who was labelled as a complete failure and a bankrupt, and a stepfather who had been executed for plotting against Rome. These were not insuperable problems but he needed to ally himself with some wealthy politician who would help him in his career. Until he joined Caesar he seems to have associated with all the wrong people and made no effort to ally himself with the right ones. Nor did he initially seek a military appointment, though this is where his greatest talent lay. He knew how to lead men almost as well as Caesar did and he was a force to be reckoned with as an orator, though he was mocked by his enemies as too florid and full of bombast. Perhaps so, but he got results.

Antony's greatest talent was as a loyal second in command. He was not a formulator of policy, or a reformer burning with desire to reorder the state. And yet in his reorganisation of the east after Philippi, though he was the successor of Pompey the Great, he was not a slavish imitator. Caesar was dead, so he could not turn to his erstwhile leader for advice. He was alone in command of a vast area of very diverse people and customs, with many different rulers, each of them of varied calibre and trustworthiness. In the west, territorial control was simplified. Spain, Gaul, Sardinia, Corsica, Sicily, and Africa were for the most part Roman provinces, governed by legates answerable to Octavian. The east was a mixture of provinces and small kingdoms, and there was always the perceived threat from the Parthians, so the frontiers had to be secured, either by the provincial governors and armed forces, or by alliances with the city states and small kingdoms bordering on the Roman provinces. Antony's diplomacy and careful sifting of who was reliable, and who was not, and where territorial boundaries should be drawn, stood the test of time after his death. It has been pointed out that Augustus did not have to embark on a thorough reorganisation of Antony's work, but was able to confirm many of the rulers chosen by Antony in their kingdoms.

As an individual, Antony was of a strong build – muscular and athletic – and he liked to show off his physique by wearing short tunics. He loved wine, women, probably song, and definitely loved life. He had a sense of humour that extended to laughing at himself and he clearly did not lack courage. Probably he was noisy and boisterous at all times, and on occasion disgusting when drunk. He was also bloodthirsty when it was necessary to eliminate enemies or restore discipline in his army. So were many other Romans, Octavian for one. The proscriptions at the formation of the Triumvirate are more of a stain on Antony's reputation than Octavian's because he was

not given a chance to rewrite his own history as Octavian was. But even if he had been able to set the record straight he must take his share of the blame and he does not emerge from that episode with credit.

In a crisis in war, it was probably better to be with Antony than Octavian; except at the very end, when Octavian's ambition, money, and promises began to win over the soldiers and Antony's allies. The battle of Actium enjoys great fame as a turning point in history, but in reality it was a damp squib, not a resounding naval victory. It was guile and ruthlessness that had already won the battle and defeated Antony before any fighting started. He had been loyal and trusting for too long, unable or unwilling to believe that he had been converted into an enemy until it was abundantly obvious, and when he made plans and turned to meet the threat it was already too late. His friends had tried to advise him that his association with Cleopatra was damaging him in Rome, but he would not abandon her. If blame attaches to him at all it is for lack of foresight, for naively believing that he would be allowed to get on with organising the east without interference from Octavian, for refusing to go to Rome and promote himself, for his failure to protest when Octavian took over his western provinces, for discounting the mileage that Octavian could make from his actions and behaviour to use against him at appropriate opportunities. Antony was ambitious and ruthless, but not ambitious enough to want to rule the world, and not ruthless enough to trample on his associates to do it.

Did he really love Cleopatra? Was it just inertia that made him unable to jettison her and focus solely on his own promotion? Most probably not. He acknowledged his children by her, and though he spent a great deal of time apart from her he returned to her whenever he could and seemed to find her company enjoyable and refreshing. If he had wanted to avoid her there was no lack of cities where he could have chosen to stay. Was it the abject kind of love that placed him completely under her thumb, as Octavian portrayed him? Cleopatra made territorial demands on him, but he refused some of them. He could think for himself.

Despite the attempts to blacken his character and ignore or suppress his achievements, Antony emerges as vibrantly human. He was not perfect and would never have claimed that he was. He had weaknesses and flaws, talents and abilities. Just like most people, in fact, and was probably infinitely better company than any of his contemporaries.

CHRONOLOGY

All dates are BC

- | | |
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| 83 | Birth of Antony (not established beyond doubt; 86 and 81 have also been suggested). |
| 74 | Antony's father, Marcus Antonius, is praetor. |
| 73 | Marcus Antonius begins his command against the pirates. |
| 71 | Marcus Antonius is killed while still in office. |
| 66 | Pompey the Great is given an extraordinary command against the Mediterranean pirates, with a fleet and large army, under his 24 legates. He completes the task in less than two months, and goes on to another command against Mithradates. |
| 63 | Marcus Tullius Cicero consul with Antony's uncle Gaius Antonius Hybrida; Cicero reveals the so-called Catilinarian conspiracy; Antony's stepfather Lentulus Sura executed without trial. Julius Caesar becomes Pontifex Maximus, and tries to persuade Cicero to send the Catilinarian conspirators away from Rome and keep them under house arrest. |
| 62 | Pompey the Great returns to Rome after victorious campaign against Mithradates. Julius Caesar is praetor. Clodius causes scandal during Bona Dea ceremony in Caesar's house. |
| 60 | Pompey, Crassus and Caesar make an informal alliance, called by modern historians the First Triumvirate, labelled by |

	contemporaries as the Three Headed Monster. Caesar stands for consulship.
59	Caesar is consul, forces through legislation to settle Pompey's veterans and ratify his organisation of the eastern provinces and kingdoms; receives Gaul as his proconsular province.
58	Caesar goes to Gaul, and Antony goes to Greece to study. Gabinius offers him a cavalry command in Syria. In Rome, Clodius is tribune, and the city becomes increasingly lawless.
57	Antony commands cavalry in Palestine and Arabia. Pompey takes control in Rome.
56	Antony marches to Egypt with Gabinius' troops to put Ptolemy Auletes back on throne. Caesar meets with Pompey and Crassus to renew their mutual agreement, or Triumvirate.
55	Antony remains in Syria with Gabinius. Pompey and Crassus are consuls. They pass a law to extend Caesar's command in Gaul for another five years.
54	Crassus arrives in Syria for Parthian campaign. Antony does not join him, goes to Gaul to join Caesar. In Rome Pompey's man Milo opposes Clodius, riots ensue.
53	Defeat and death of Crassus at Carrhae in Parthia. Antony goes to Rome to stand for election as quaestor, asking for Cicero's support.
52	Antony quaestor in Gaul. In Rome Milo kills Clodius in January, rioting put down by Pompey as sole consul in February. Gallic leader Vercingetorix leads

	widespread revolt. Caesar besieges Gergovia and Alesia. First mention of Antony in Caesar's Commentary on Gallic War. Vercingetorix defeated by end of the year. Caesar obtains permission to stand <i>in absentia</i> for the elections in 49 for the consulship of 48.
51	Caesar puts down final stages of revolt. In Rome Caesar's enemies begin agitation to recall him.
50	Antony is elected augur for life and tribune for December 50 to December 49. Agitation for Caesar's recall stopped by Antony's friend, the tribune Curio.
49	Antony tries to veto measures to recall Caesar and deprive him of command, and is ejected from the Senate. Joins Caesar after crossing of the Rubicon. Pompey assembles army and retreats to Brundisium and then to Greece. Antony as tribune given propraetorial powers to command troops to keep order in Italy while Caesar fights Pompeians in Spain.
48	Half of Caesar's army embarks for Greece, Antony commands the rest at Brundisium, blockaded by Pompeian fleet. Seizes opportunity to set sail and lands in Greece. Takes part in campaign at Dyrrachium and then battle of Pharsalus.
47	Caesar is appointed Dictator in Rome while still in Greece. Antony claims post of Master of Horse, commanding in Italy while Caesar follows Pompey to Egypt. Caesar fights the army of Ptolemy XIII in Alexandrian war, and puts Cleopatra on throne of Egypt.
46	Antony still in command in Italy,

Caesar fights Pompeians in Africa and Spain. Dolabella stirs up trouble in Rome, Antony quells it with too much force and loses Caesar's favour. He marries Fulvia, widow of Curio.

45 Caesar returns from Spain, Antony back in favour, promised consulship with Caesar for following year. Caesar plans Parthian campaign, receives unprecedented honours for victories in Africa and Spain.

44 Caesar takes up fifth consulship with Antony as colleague, and is made Dictator for life. At the Lupercalia in February Antony offers Caesar the crown, but he refuses it. In March the Liberators assassinate Caesar, Antony takes control and restores uneasy peace. He becomes *flamen* for the cult of the Divine Caesar. He exchanges province of Macedonia for Cisalpine Gaul. Octavian arrives in Rome in May. Brutus and Cassius leave Italy for the east and begin to recruit armies. The Senate led by Cicero turns against Antony, who besieges the governor of Cisalpine Gaul, Decimus Brutus, at Mutina. Octavian joins Cicero and gains command of troops.

43 Antony is defeated at Mutina, and retreats across the Alps to Gaul. Gradually all the governors of the Gallic and Spanish provinces join him. Octavian seizes Rome and becomes consul. Antony, Octavian and Aemilius Lepidus form the official group of three men to reconstitute the Republic, known as the Second Triumvirate. Proscriptions begin; murder of

Cicero.

Brutus and Cassius now established in the east. Lepidus consul in Rome, Antony and Octavian raise troops and sail to the east, and defeat Brutus and Cassius at the battle of Philippi. Antony remains in the east to reorganise and settle the territories that have suffered under the Liberators or gave them assistance, but also retains command of Gaul, via his legates. Octavian takes charge of the remaining western provinces. Sextus Pompey and his fleet become a serious problem for Rome and Italy.

Antony starts to reorganise the east, summons Cleopatra to Tarsus, and joins her in Alexandria later in the year. In Italy Antony's wife Fulvia and his brother Lucius start to agitate against Octavian.

Lucius and Fulvia are defeated by Octavian at siege of Perusia. Antony's general in Gaul dies and Octavian takes control. Antony and Octavian settle their differences at Brundisium and Antony marries Octavia. In the east the Parthians invade Syria.

Antony and Octavian meet Sextus Pompey at Misenum and make a treaty. In the east Ventidius defeats the Parthians.

Antony takes over from Ventidius at the siege of Samosata, then starts to plan for Parthian campaign. Sextus Pompey reverts to piracy.

Five year term for Triumvirate expires and is renewed at Tarentum where Octavian and Antony meet. Antony gives ships

- 36 and soldiers to Octavian.
Octavian and Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa defeat Sextus Pompey at the battle of Naulochus. Octavian deprives Aemilius Lepidus of power, allows him to remain as Pontifex Maximus. Antony's Parthian campaign halted at Phraaspa; the Armenian allies desert him; he retreats and loses most of his army.
- 35 Antony spends most of the year in Egypt. Sextus Pompey is killed.
- 34 Antony invades and conquers Armenia, then holds parade in Alexandria and shares out some of the eastern territories at the Donations of Alexandria. Octavian campaigns in Illyricum, to earn military glory that contrasts with Antony's failure, and to be able to keep an army together within striking distance of Rome.
- 33 Antony allies with the king of Media, and plans to invade Parthia again. In Rome, Octavian plans for war, blackening Antony's name and portraying Cleopatra as the real enemy.
- 32 Octavian seizes Antony's will and reads it to the Senate. Senators agree on war against Cleopatra. All of Italy swears an oath of loyalty to Octavian. Antony and Cleopatra make preparations for war. Antony divorces Octavia.
- 31 Antony's consulship is cancelled by Octavian. Antony assembles fleet and army at Actium. Octavian brings troops and Agrippa captures naval bases and harbours. Antony and Cleopatra decide to break out of the bay, leaving Canidius to take the army overland to Egypt,

Octavian buys the loyalty of the soldiers. Cleopatra enters Alexandria as if celebrating a victory. Antony retires to the Timoneum.

Antony rallies and decides to fight as Octavian approaches, but his troops and fleet join Octavian. Antony and Cleopatra commit suicide, Antony's son, Antyllus, and Cleopatra's son, Caesarion, are both killed, but the younger children are taken to Rome. Antony's memory is damned and his birthday declared *nefastus*.

GLOSSARY

Aedile: city magistrate originally responsible for supervision of the *aedes*, or the temples of the plebs. During the Republic there were two aediles subordinate to the tribunes of the plebs, and later two more were elected from the patricians (*aediles curules*). In the Empire the main duties of the aediles were care of the city, including keeping the streets clean, keeping public order, and attending to the water supply and markets.

Aerarium: treasury. The main state treasury of the Republic was kept in the temple of Saturn in the Forum. Finances were controlled by the Senate, with day-to-day administration in the hands of two quaestors.

As: lowest denomination Roman coin, made of bronze.

Auctoritas: a measure of the reputation and social and political standing of Roman senators and politicians. The literal translation 'authority' does not convey its true meaning. *Auctoritas* could be earned and increased by political or military achievements and lost after disgraceful conduct.

Aureus: Roman gold coin worth twenty-five *denarii*.

Auxilia: literally 'help troops', the term used by the Romans to describe the units recruited from non-Romans, organised as *alae* and *cohortes* during the Empire.

Censor: ranking higher than the consuls, two censors were elected every five years to serve for eighteen months. They were usually experienced men who had held the consulship. Their main duty was to take the census and allocate all citizens to their voting centuries and tribes. They were also responsible for the upkeep of moral standards and could demote senators and equestrians of unsuitable character.

Centuria: a voting unit of the people of Rome in the Republic. From the late Republic and throughout the Empire a century was a unit of the legion, nominally of 100 men but in practice of eighty men.

Comitia : public assemblies. The *comitia centuriata* was based on military centuries, could vote 'yes' or 'no' to wars, and was responsible for the election of the consuls and praetors. The *comitia curiata* was based on the most ancient divisions of the citizens, the *curiae*. This assembly bestowed *imperium* on

magistrates, without which no one could command armies. The *comitia tributa* was a tribal assembly which elected the tribunes, aediles, and quaestors. Its importance increased in Antony's day because this assembly could pass laws without going through the Senate, and Caesar resorted to it when he was consul in 59.

Consul: senior magistrate of the Republic. Consuls were elected annually in pairs, responsible for civil duties and command of the armies. During the Empire the consuls were still elected annually, but with reduced military responsibilities, and subordinate to the Emperor.

Denarius: Roman silver coin worth four *sestertii*.

Dictator: elected in emergencies on the recommendation of the consuls, the Dictator was the most important magistrate for his allotted period of six months, overriding the power and authority of all other magistrates, who remained in office but subordinate to him. Caesar accepted the anomalous office of perpetual Dictator at the beginning of 44, which would have allowed him to put into effect the reforms that he envisaged, but he was assassinated in March. Antony abolished the office.

Equestrians: the middle classes, as opposed to the senators and the ordinary people. They usually ran businesses, sometimes on behalf of senators, who as a class were forbidden to engage in trade or work.

Imperium: the early kings of Rome were holders of *imperium*, comprising command of the armies and exercise of legal power. During the Republic, this power passed to the higher magistrates, the annually elected consuls and the praetors, and the Dictators for their six-month term of office. It was extended to the proconsuls and propraetor as commanders and later governors of the provinces. In Imperial times, only the Emperors held *imperium*, which was delegated to his appointed commanders and governors.

Legatus or legate: In Antony's day a *legatus* was usually chosen by a commander to carry out certain tasks, which could involve a temporary independent command of troops, but also covered several other duties. Such appointments were sanctioned by the Senate. For instance, Pompey was granted the power to appoint twenty-four legates for his Mediterranean command and Caesar chose his own men in Gaul, of whom Antony was one.

Legion: the term *legio* originally meant the choosing, or the levy, and was eventually applied to the main unit of the Roman army. Around 5,000 strong, the legion was an infantry unit, but also contained some cavalry.

Magister Equitum: master of horse. In the Republic this title was given to the second in command of a Dictator. The appointee held power for six months like the Dictator, and had to lay down his powers at the end of the term. In the late Roman army it became an important long-term military post in command of the cavalry units.

Maniple: literally 'a handful', a term denoting a unit of the Republican army consisting of two centuries.

Optimates: literally the 'best men', such as Cicero and Cato, who upheld the ancient traditions of the Republic, which meant maintaining the privileges and dominance of the senators. They were opposed to the *populares* who worked for reform by using the support of the people.

Praefectus: prefect, a title given to several different civilian officials and military officers. Augustus created a career path for equestrians, culminating in the four great prefectures: *Praefectus Annonae* (the prefect of the *annona*, in charge of military supplies), *Praefectus Vigili* (the prefect of the *Vigiles*, the fire brigade in Rome), the Praetorian prefect, and the prefect of Egypt.

Praetor: the praetorship had a long history. Originally the praetors were the chief magistrates in early Republican Rome until they were replaced by the consuls. During the later Republic, in the absence of the consuls, the praetor was in charge of the courts, acted as president of the Senate, and had the right to command armies.

Proconsul: as the Romans extended their power over wider territories, more magistrates were required to govern the provinces or command armies in wars, so the powers of the consuls could be bestowed upon men who had held a magistracy, or in emergencies upon private individuals for an appointed time. Later in the Republic the proconsulship was used more frequently to enable consuls to command armies and/or govern the more important provinces after they laid down their consulship.

Propraetor: a praetor whose term of office for one year had expired but who retained the powers of the office, usually as governor of one of the less-important provinces. Antony was granted propraetorian powers in Italy during Caesar's absence so that he could legally command troops.

Quaestor: originally the lowest-ranking magistrates of the Republic, appointed to assist the consuls in financial matters. The office was held by young men at the start of their career before they had entered the Senate. Quaestors acted as deputies to consular

governors and could hold commands in the army. Sometimes in modern versions of ancient works quaestor is translated in the military context as quartermaster, which is not strictly accurate.

Sestertius: Roman silver coin. Four *sestertii* equalled one *denarius*.

Tribune: originally created to protect the people against depredations of the patricians. In Antony's day there were ten tribunes elected by the *comitia tributa*. They took up office on 10 December, before the consuls entered their posts on 1 January. Tribunes could block any legislation by their power of veto and were increasingly used by ambitious politicians. A most important attribute was tribunician sacrosanctity, which Caesar took up as his justification for the civil war against Pompey and the senatorial party. Octavian-Augustus was granted tribunician powers, which became the mainstay of his rule and more important than his consulships or commands.

Triumph: during the Republic, a triumph was granted by the Senate to victorious generals, who valued this opportunity to show off their captives and the spoils of war by processing along the Via Sacra in Rome to the Temple of Jupiter. The *triumphator* rode in a chariot with his face painted red and was supposed to approach the Temple on his knees to dedicate the spoils with a slave at his side constantly reminding him that he was mortal. Augustus recognised the inflammatory nature of the triumph and took steps to limit it to members of the Imperial family. Other generals were denied the procession and were granted *ornamenta triumphalia*, triumphal insignia, instead of the procession through the streets of Rome.

FURTHER READING

ANCIENT SOURCES

The following works are all available in the Loeb Classical Library, published by Harvard University Press. Each volume gives the Latin or Greek text on one page and an English translation on the opposite page. There are notes and references explaining difficult passages, alternative readings or disputed points, and each volume or set of volumes has an index.

Appian, *Roman History*, vols ii–iv. (Covers the civil wars and Antony's life.)

Caesar, *Gallic War*.

———*Civil War*.

———*Alexandrian Wars*.

Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, 3 vols.

———*Letters to His Friends*, 3 vols.

———*Philippics*.

Dio, *Roman History*, vols iii–vi.

Plutarch, *Parallel Lives*, vol. ix. (Pairs Antony and Demetrius.)

Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, vol. i. (The biographies of the Deified Julius and the Deified Augustus make reference to Antony.)

Some ancient texts are available in English translation, with notes and indices, published by Penguin Classics.

Appian, *The Civil Wars* (1996).

Since Plutarch's biography is the main source for Antony's life, it is important to survey some of the translations and studies of his work.

Plutarch, *Life of Antony*, ed. C. B. R. Pelling, Cambridge Greek and Latin Texts (Cambridge University Press, 1988). This is not a translation, but gives the Greek text with copious notes and a series of introductory chapters on: Plutarch himself and how he worked, on the sources that he used, and the use that Shakespeare made of the biography.

———*Roman Lives*, trans. Robin Waterfield (Oxford University Press, 1999). Covers eight of Plutarch's biographies of famous Romans,

including Marius, Sulla, Pompey, Caesar, and Antony. So the background to Antony's life and that of his contemporaries is contained in one volume, with a chronological table, maps, short sections on Roman names and Roman money and measures, a glossary of special terms, and explanatory notes related to the text on events and personalities. Readable and lively.

MODERN WORKS

For general Roman history and the background on the period of Antony's life, see the following books.

Cambridge Ancient History, vol. ix, *The Last Age of the Roman Republic, 146–43 BC*, ed. J. A. Crook, et al. (2nd edn; Cambridge University Press, 1992).

Cambridge Ancient History, vol. x, *The Augustan Empire, 43 BC–AD 69*, ed. A. K. Bowman, et al. (2nd edn; Cambridge University Press, 1997). These works are written by various specialists and are very expensive but invaluable. The older editions published in the 1930s are still useful for their maps and for an account of who did what and when, but scholarship and opinions have moved on.

Grant, M., *Roman History from Coins* (Cambridge University Press, 1968). Useful because much of the information about Antony was deliberately erased and his coinage and that of his contemporaries provide a few of the missing details. The book covers all of Roman history, so the sections dealing with the late Republic are brief, but it is good on coinage generally in the Roman world.

Gruen, E. S., *The Last Generation of the Roman Republic* (University of California Press, 1974; repr. 1995). Not for beginners, and getting on a bit now. The 1995 paperback reprint is not a new edition but it contains an updated bibliography and a discussion of the newer works at the beginning of the book.

Matyszak, P., *Chronicle of the Roman Republic: The Rulers of Ancient Rome from Romulus to Augustus* (Thames & Hudson, 2003). The last section covers Roman history from the Social War (just before Antony was born) to the final triumph of Octavian-Augustus after Antony's death. The book is easy to use with sections of each of the main personalities and it is very well illustrated. A good introduction.

Shotter, D., *The Fall of the Roman Republic* (Routledge, 1994). One of the Lancaster Pamphlets series aimed at students, containing the salient points, clearly set out, with a short discussion of cause and effect.

Syme, R., *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford University Press, 1939). A detailed study of the period of the later Republic written at a time when Dictators, backed by their armies, were emerging in Europe. It is written in a distinctive style and assumes a certain amount of prior knowledge about the Roman world. As with all works of this venerable vintage, some of the conclusions and opinions contained in this book have been challenged.

The battle of Actium has a literature of its own dealing with several aspects of the political and military spheres, including the actual tactics and speculation about Antony's intentions. Considerable thought has been given to the role of Actium as a turning-point in history (or not, as the case may be) and the use that Octavian made of it.

Carter, J. M., *The Battle of Actium* (Hamish Hamilton, 1970).

Gurval, R. A., *Actium and Augustus: The Politics and Emotions of Civil War* (University of Michigan Press, 1995).

Richardson, G. W., 'Actium', *Journal of Roman Studies*, 27 (1937), 153–64

Tarn, W. W., 'The Battle of Actium', *Journal of Roman Studies*, 21 (1931), 173–99.

There are many biographies of Mark Antony's contemporaries and colleagues. The following represent a selection.

Bradford, E., *Cleopatra* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1971). A little old now but it reads well.

Everett, A., *Cicero: A Turbulent Life* (John Murray, 2001). A sympathetic portrait and therefore understandably somewhat hostile to Antony. Readable, with many quotes from Cicero's letters and other works.

Flamarion, E., *Cleopatra: From History to Legend* (Thames & Hudson, 1997). Illustrated.

Gelzer, M., *Caesar: Politician and Statesman* (Harvard University Press, 1969). A classic work first published in German. Antony is not mentioned at length but the book provides the background for his association with Caesar.

Goldsworthy, A., *Caesar* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2006). Chronological narrative, well told. Illustrated and with references.

Grant, M., *Cleopatra* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1972). Useful for its readable text and detailed notes on sources.

Greenhalgh, P., *Pompey: The Roman Alexander* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson,

1980).

— *Pompey: The Republican Prince* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1981).

Lindsay, J., *Cleopatra* (Constable, 1971).

— *Mark Antony and his Contemporaries* (Routledge, 1936).

Marshall, B. A., *Crassus: A Political Biography* (Adolf M. Hakkert, 1976).

Meier, C., *Caesar* (HarperCollins, 1995). Much praised as an assessment of Caesar and an analysis of his life and times. An undoubtedly scholarly work that would have been even more useful if it had included notes to explain precisely where the information comes from.

Seager, R., *Pompey: A Political Biography* (Blackwell, 1979).

Shotter, D., *Augustus Caesar* (Routledge, 1991). Another of the Lancaster Pamphlets series for students, outlining the most important points.

Southern, P. *Pompey: Caesar's Friend and Foe* (Tempus, 2002). 'A lively general introduction', it says in a bibliography.

On Antony himself there are:

Huzar, E. G., *Mark Antony: A Biography* (University of Minnesota Press, 1978; repr. Croom Helm, 1986). A scholarly account with lots of detail and copious and detailed references to the ancient sources.

Roberts, A., *Mark Antony: His Life and Times* (Malvern Publishing Company, 1988). Concentrates on Antony's life as a soldier and gives detailed accounts of his battles and campaigns.

Southern, P., *Antony and Cleopatra* (Amberley, 2009). Combines two lives in one narrative.

Weigall, A., *Mark Antony: His Life and Times* (London, 1931). Still worth reading despite its age. Arthur Weigall worked for the ancient monuments service in Egypt and wrote a variety of books on ancient history, all in a very enjoyable and readable style.